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THE WORKS

Of the late REVEREND

Mr ROBERT RICCALTOUN,

Minister of the Gospel at Hobkirk.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED.

VOLUME III.

CONTAINING

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CONTENTS.

		Pag.
Introduction,		1
GALATIANS,	chap. i. 1.—5.	11
	chap. i. 6.—10.	27
	chap. i. 11.—24.	47
	chap. ii. 1.—10.	73
	chap. ii. 11.—21.	109
	chap. iii. 1.—5.	143
	chap. iii. 6.—12.	171
	chap. iii. 13.—18.	199
	chap. iii. 19.—29.	230
	chap. iv. 1.—7.	264
	chap. iv. 8.—18.	290
	chap. iv. 19.—31.	318
	chap. v. 1.—6.	348
	chap. v. 7.—26.	379
	chap. vi. 1.—10.	423
	chap. vi. 11.—18.	451

9-28-26
E.S.H.

ERRATA.

Pag. 261. *lin.* 5. *from the foot, for* which *read* whereby

Pag. 336. *lin.* 6. *from the top, for* early *read* earthly

Pag. 362. *lin.* 8. *from the top, for* purified *read* juſtified

NOTES and OBSERVATIONS

ON

The Epiſtle to the GALATIANS.

THE writing before us is an epiſtle directed by the Apoſtle Paul to the churches of Galatia. Thoſe who know any thing of that kind of writing, will not expect the methodical exactneſs of an accurate treatiſe, much leſs the formality of a ſcholaſtic diſputant. The writer who underſtands his buſineſs, will never indeed loſe ſight of the point he has in view, nor omit any thing that is neceſſary or proper for attaining his purpoſe: but, at the ſame time, he will lay the materials together in ſuch an eaſy natural way, that every new thought ſhall appear to be ſuggeſted by what went before, until the whole plan be finiſhed; each part throwing light upon another, and all of them making one conſiſtent piece.

The epiſtle we are now entering upon will be found an abſolute maſterpiece in this way of writing, by all who underſtand it, and can enter into the writer's views. But to do this to purpoſe, one muſt be well acquainted, both with the character of the writer, and of thoſe to whom he wrote, their mutual connections and relations, and what had formerly paſſed between them in their intercourſe one with another.

The author is ſo well known, that it will be needleſs to ſpend words on his character; eſpecially when the epiſtle itſelf preſents us with as much as we have any occaſion for. Beſides his natural genius, which appears to have been one of the greateſt, and the beſt education the world then afforded, he was peculiarly honoured by the ſupernatural inſtruction of him who is perfect in underſtanding, and by the perſonal appearance of the glorious Son of God, often repeated in the moſt friendly and familiar manner: he was endued with the moſt extraordinary meaſures of that divine Spirit, which leads into all truth; and received from Chriſt a ſpecial commiſſion to carry the know-

ledge

ledge of his name to the Heathen nations, who had been for many ages without God and without hope in the world: in conſequence whereof, he had brought the Galatians, to whom this epiſtle is addreſſed, to the knowledge of God, and of eternal life in his ſon Jeſus Chriſt.

It will be of little moment to our preſent purpoſe, to know, that theſe Galatians were originally of the ancient Gauls, or to inquire how they came to ſettle in the Leſſer Aſia. It is ſufficient to know, that they were Heathens, and involved in the groſſeſt ignorance and idolatry, like their neighbouring nations, until the Apoſtle came among them, and taught them. His inſtructions, we find by what himſelf ſays, they received with great readineſs and pleaſure, and under his direction were formed into ſocieties for worſhip; which, by a word long appropriated to theſe religious ſocieties, are called *churches*; and *churches of Chriſt*, becauſe of their ſpecial relation to him, on whom all their knowledge, and hopes of eternal life, are founded. This, it is eaſy to ſee, muſt have given him a peculiar intereſt in them as his ſpiritual children, and ſomething

even more than a paternal tenderneſs for them, and authority over them, as one commiſſioned by God himſelf, and his bleſſed Son Jeſus Chriſt, to whom they owed all they were, or poſſeſſed in a preſent world, and all they had to hope for in the world to come. And hence ariſes the very different manner of this epiſtle from that to the Romans; though, in both, the ſubjects are very nearly the ſame. He writes to the Romans more at large, and opens more diſtinctly the particular heads of that goſpel he was intruſted with, as they were ſtrangers to him, and he a ſtranger to them, and treats them with great ſoftneſs and regard. But to the Galatians, he contents himſelf with ſhort hints and alluſions to what himſelf had taught them; and treats them with another ſort of freedom, even the authority of a maſter, or rather of a careful father, anxious about his beloved children.

And there was great reaſon, as appears by the immediate occaſion of his writing. The Jewiſh nation had been, from the days of their father Abraham, ſeparated by God as his peculiar people, and witneſſes for him to the reſt of the world.

Abraham

Abraham received the ſign of circumciſion, as the ſeal of that righteouſneſs which was by faith: and his poſterity had a peculiar law given them in a very ſolemn manner for keeping up the memorial of that ſame righteouſneſs, and preſerving the knowledge of it from being corrupted by the imaginations and inventions of men. The obſervance of this law was made the tenure by which they held the poſſeſſion of the land which God had given them, and which was ſecured to them ay and until the Meſſiah, the promiſed ſeed, ſhould come. On this account they had got it ſtrongly into their heads, that there was no way by which any others could obtain an intereſt in the bleſſing of Abraham, or eternal life, but by incorporating with their nation, by receiving this ſame circumciſion, and ſubmitting to the law of Moſes.

Great numbers of them, however, overcome by the evidence of our Lord's miracles, and reſurrection from the dead; with the glory that followed in his aſcenſion to heaven, and ſending the Holy Spirit according to his promiſe, came to believe, in ſo far as the evidence compelled them, that Jeſus

was

was really the Chriſt, or promiſed Meſſiah. But not being thoroughly acquainted with the character and buſineſs of this ſame Meſſiah, nor with the true nature and intention of their own law, they ſtill retained their national prejudice; and therefore maintained, that after all the Meſſiah had done, unleſs a man was circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, and thus ſubmitted to the Jewiſh law, he could not be ſaved; and therefore, however the Gentiles might be admitted heirs of eternal life, yet, in order to this, there was ſtill a neceſſity of their being incorporated with the Jewiſh nation, and ſubmitting to the law of Moſes. Much heat and contention did this perverſe opinion occaſion in the ſeveral churches: nor did the apoſtolical deciſion put an end to it wholly, until that nation was deſtroyed, their temple ruined, and the obſervation of the eſſentials of that law rendered impracticable. This we are certainly informed of, that they continued zealous for their law until Paul was made a priſoner; and their attachment to it was in a manner connived at by the apoſtles themſelves, as appears from the advice that was given

to Paul for removing the prejudices which the Jews at Jeruſalem had conceived againſt him, or rather for preventing the bad effects of their enormous zeal.

This prepoſterous zeal of theirs was accompanied, as falſe zeal uſually is, with inveterate enmity againſt all oppoſers, and unwearied attempts to make proſelytes. Some of theſe zealots had inſinuated themſelves into the good graces of the Galatian converts to Chriſtianity. This could not be done but by depretiating either the Apoſtle or his doctrine. and, by what we find in this epiſtle, they ſpared neither the one nor the other: for, not contented with charging his doctrine with eſſential defects, and undertaking to teach a more perfect way, they directly attacked his character and apoſtolic authority: That as he was none of thoſe whom Jeſus in his lifetime had called to that office, he was either no apoſtle at all, or one of an inferior order, commiſſioned and ſent out by thoſe who were truly ſo: nay, they ſcrupled not to ſay, that the other apoſtles, being all of their mind, Paul himſelf was now better taught than formerly, and was as much for circumciſion as they were;

were; which probably they might give ſome colour to by his cauſing Timothy to be circumciſed when he took him for his companion. And little wonder it is, that ſuch artful inſinuations ſhould make a very conſiderable impreſſion on the perhaps honeſt, though weak minds, of thoſe newly brought out of the groſs darkneſs of Heatheniſm.

At what time this epiſtle was written, does not appear; only, that it was not long after the Galatians were either converted or viſited by him. But this we may poſitively ſay, that the great warmth he ſhows was not owing, as ſome have imagined, to his being himſelf but newly converted: for we are ſure, that it was written more than fourteen, or rather more than ſeventeen years after his converſion, as appears from the firſt verſe of the ſecond chapter, compared with the laſt verſes of the firſt chapter. Some have been very poſitive, that it muſt have been written before the deciſion recorded Acts xv. mainly becauſe he makes no particular mention of that deciſion in this epiſtle. But if it ſhould be made appear, that the Galatians had not been converted, and that Paul was never among

among them until ſome time after that meeting, that point would be effectually determined. We have a very particular account of his firſt journey into theſe countries along with Barnabas. But Galatia was none of the places where they publiſhed the goſpel, nor have we any mention of it till ſome time after his journey with Barnabas to Jeruſalem, and after they had ſeparated; which is commonly reckoned to have been in the year 53. We find indeed, that he viſited Galatia a ſecond time; but whether before or after writing this epiſtle, we have no evidence, nor is it worth while to make gueſſes about it.

For preventing the prejudice which the churches muſt have ſuſtained by ſuch unnatural mixtures of the legal inſtitutions with the goſpel of Chriſt, the Apoſtle addreſſes himſelf with great, and truly divine ſkill, to vindicate his own character, to warn them of their danger, and the deſtructive tendency of thoſe tenets they had too far encouraged, in the ſtrongeſt manner; and, at the ſame time, to convince them of his tender and fatherly affection toward them, whom he regarded as his

own children. If any ſhould aſk, What is that to us now, when there are no ſuch parties, nor any tenets favouring circumciſion, or the obſervation of any Jewiſh rites or cuſtoms? it needs only to be conſidered, what it was that made them of ſuch a dangerous tendency, viz. that the laying ſuch weight on theſe obſervances miſrepreſented Chriſt and his ſalvation, as at beſt but imperfect, until it was eked out by other things; and thus, by building their faith and hope in God on theſe ſupplements to the goſpel, drew off their dependence on Chriſt, the only foundation which God has laid. He muſt therefore be a very ſuperficial obſerver, who does not find the Apoſtle's reaſoning every way as ſtrong, againſt every attempt to found our acceptance with God on our own obedience to any law whatſoever, except the obedience of faith to that great fundamental law, the commandment which God has given to believe in his bleſſed Son, and to love one another: for ſo the Apoſtle expreſsly tells us, That "in "Chriſt Jeſus, neither circumciſion avail-"eth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but "faith, which worketh by love." Whatſoever

ſoever is not of faith, which ſtands not on that foundation which faith builds on, is ſin: for it is a tranſgreſſion of the great fundamental commandment, the law of faith, and what our Lord himſelf has declared, John vi. 29. to be "the "work of God."

CHAPTER i. 1.——5.

1. *Paul an apoſtle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt, and God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead),* 2. *And all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia:* 3. *Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jeſus Chriſt,* 4. *Who gave himſelf for our ſins, that he might deliver us from this preſent evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father:* 5. *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

THere is a remarkable peculiarity in Paul's manner of addreſſing his epiſtles, which is not to be found in thoſe of the other apoſtles. James aſſumes no title but that of "a *ſervant* of God, and "of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt." Which word, in the original language, does not denote a hired, but a bond ſervant, one who was

abſolutely his maſter's property, and had no right to diſpoſe of himſelf. John, in his firſt epiſtle, mentions neither his name nor title, but enters, as it were, abruptly on his ſubject; and, in the other two, deſigns himſelf only, *The elder*, or *aged*; the title, it would ſeem, by which he was diſtinguiſhed among thoſe to whom he wrote. Jude aſſumes the deſignation of *a ſervant of the Lord*, only to diſtinguiſh himſelf from another of the ſame name, he ſtyles himſelf likewiſe, *The brother of James*. Peter only joins the title of *Apoſtle* ſingly with that of *a ſervant of God*. And they needed no more, as their apoſtolic authority was beyond diſpute. But Paul was none of thoſe who received their commiſſion before their Lord left this lower world; neither was he choſen by lot, as Matthias was; which made it in ſome meaſure needful to vouch his authority as an apoſtle, That he was ſo *by the will of God*. I need not obſerve the peculiar ſignificancy of that word, as it imports ſomething, not only greatly more than a divine permiſſion, or even what is brought about in the courſe of ordinary providence; it is the ſame thing as the expreſs appointment and authoritative or-

der

der of that God whoſe apoſtle he was: and that office could not be undertaken without a commiſſion from him who ſent him.

But in the addreſs of this epiſtle, there is ſomething peculiarly ſingular, and wiſely ſuited to the caſe of thoſe to whom he wrote; and particularly to obviate the malicious ſuggeſtions of their new teachers, by which they attempted to deſtroy, or at leaſt to weaken, his apoſtolical authority. Chriſt had left the world ſeveral years before Paul had ceaſed to perſecute thoſe who acknowledged him; and from this they might very plauſibly infer, that whatever miniſterial powers he was inveſted with, muſt have been, as we ſay, at ſecond hand, and conveyed to him by thoſe whom the Lord himſelf had appointed his apoſtles, and witneſſes of his reſurrection. Two things appear neceſſary by Peter's ſpeech, Acts i. 15. &c. to qualify any one for that office: 1*ſt*, That he had attended Jeſus from the beginning; and, 2*dly*, That he had ſeen him aſcend up into heaven after his reſurrection: and as Paul had neither of theſe advantages, it might have been objected, that he could not be an a-

poſtle

poſtle commiſſioned by Chriſt perſonally; but at moſt was only a ſort of miniſter or deputy of the true apoſtles.

In the addreſs of his epiſtle, he directly obviates theſe exceptions in their fulleſt ſtrength. He aſſerts his apoſtleſhip by aſſuming the title; and, at the ſame time, refuſes any dependence whatever upon any of mankind, apoſtles, or others. He had not, he ſays, his commiſſion from men, as one ſent by them to preach the goſpel; nay, nor ſo much as by their interpoſition or miniſtry, even ſuppoſing they had acted by divine order, as when he and Barnabas were directed to be ſeparated unto the work to which Chriſt had called them. And this he inſtructs with great evidence, by the account he gives of himſelf in this and the following chapters.

But that he was really an apoſtle, and had as good a title to that character as any of the reſt, he proves, by this ſure evidence, That he had his commiſſion and powers directly and immediately from *Jeſus Chriſt, and from God the Father, who raiſed him from the dead.* Thoſe who know and conſider the union and eſſential connection between the only true God and

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, whom he ſent, will need no further proof of his being conſtituted an apoſtle by God the Father, than that he was ſo by Jeſus Chriſt. But we are further aſſured, that all power in heaven and earth is committed into the hand of Chriſt, and he is given in a ſpecial manner to be the head over all things to his church. So that whatever the Father does there, is done by this his beloved Son, to whom it is given to have life in himſelf, even as himſelf has it.

We do not find our Apoſtle any where in this epiſtle directly telling the Galatians how or when he was conſtituted an apoſtle by Jeſus Chriſt. This, we have reaſon to think, they had been informed of while he was among them, and that he refers to it in what he here ſays of God raiſing him from the dead. And if he ſaw Jeſus after his reſurrection and aſcenſion, when he was ſet down on the right hand of the majeſty on high, glorified with that glory which he had with the Father before the foundation of the world, he was every way as well qualified to be an apoſtle and a witneſs for him as any of them, and had good reaſon to ſay, "he

"was

" was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt " of them;" nay, and that he had a very peculiar pre-eminence, as he had ſeen him in his glory. And thus he did ſee him on his way to Damaſcus, and thereafter when he was ſent away from Jeruſalem, and expreſsly commiſſioned by him to preach the goſpel to the Gentiles, as we find him declaring, Acts xxii. 17. *et. ſeqq.* To which miniſtry Barnabas and he were afterward ſolemnly ſeparated by order of the Holy Spirit.

That the Galatians might have no room to imagine, as their new teachers were ready to ſuggeſt to them, that Paul was ſingular in what he wrote to them, he very judiciouſly joins with himſelf, verſ. 2. the *brethren who were with him* as of the ſame ſentiments. Did we know, as no doubt they did, where he was, and who were with him there when he wrote this epiſtle, we might be better able to judge of the weight their concurrence was likely to have with them. The word *brethren* is very comprehenſive. It is a title which belongs to all who believe in Jeſus Chriſt; and may well be conſtructed to intimate

to

to them, that the whole church where he then was, were of one mind in these things.

The epistle is directed, not to the church, but the *churches of Galatia*. The country which went under that name was of no great extent; by which it would seem, either that the Apostle had no notion of national churches, or that they were not then united in that manner. But what is of more moment to be observed is, that though they were corrupted to a great degree, not only in circumstantial points, but even in those which were most fundamental; even such as he calls *another gospel*, and which could not be admitted without falling from grace, and making Christ useless; he still addresses them as *churches*, calls them *brethren*, a term yet more tender and affectionate; when thoughtless zealots would have lifted up a standard of division, and raised the cry, "Come out from among them."

Hence we may observe, that it is not falling into error by mistake or seduction, but incorrigible obstinacy therein, in opposition to divine evidence laid before them, that extinguishes the Christian character.

So far from this ſpirit was our holy Apoſtle, that we find him expreſſing his ſalutation in the very ſame terms he uſes to the pureſt churches, and thoſe where he had nothing to blame; but, on the contrary, whom he gives the higheſt commendations to: *Grace to you, and peace from God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.* Whether we conſider this as a ſolemn prayer for them, or rather as an apoſtolical benediction, it carries in it the higheſt good that can enter into the heart of man to deſire. *Grace*, in the firſt and moſt natural meaning of the word, denotes free unmerited favour, entertained and manifeſted by a ſuperior to one greatly below him, who could have no ſort of pretenſions to it: and the higher and more exalted ſtation the ſuperior ſtands in, and the lower and viler the party is to whom the favour is ſhown, the greater the grace. In this view, the divine grace muſt, like its author, be abſolutely infinite. The Apoſtle has given us the neareſt proſpect we can take of it: "Where ſin abounds, "grace ſuperabounds;" and goes greatly beyond it. But the favour or grace of God is not like that of man, which often proves

proves barren and fruitleſs. It carries in it all the good the creature is capable of receiving; and every gift bears the name of the great original, and is called a *favour*, or *grace*; and when *peace* is joined with *grace*, they carry in their import every thing that can make the creature happy, and give the higheſt ſatisfaction, pleaſure, and joy; as we find the oracle given by the Lord to this ſame Apoſtle on a very preſſing occaſion, ſtates it, 2 Cor. xii. 9. "My grace is ſufficient for thee; "for my ſtrength is perfected in weak-"neſs."

Such is the grace and peace the Apoſtle here ſets before the Galatians; for it is that which comes *from God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt our Lord*. He traces it to its original: For "all things are of God," 2 Cor. v. 18. In him who is love, all grace takes its riſe; but it cannot reach ſinners, ſuch as all Adam's children are, but through Jeſus Chriſt. Where-ever he is overlooked, the view muſt be incomplete, and the medium of conveying it loſt; for the great foundation on which only it ſtands, and by which we can have any aſſurance of it, or benefit by it, will

be loſt to us. In Chriſt, and in him alone, the love of God is manifeſted and commended to us; and juſt ſo far as we know him, and believe the teſtimony the Father has given concerning him, ſo far, and no farther, we know and believe the love that God hath to us; and juſt ſo far as we know and believe the love of God to us, will our hearts be formed into the ſame image. For the Apoſtle aſſures us, that "we love "God, becauſe he firſt loved us," 1 John iv. 19.

This ſure foundation of the Chriſtian faith and hope in God the Apoſtle ſets forth, verſ. 4. very ſhortly indeed, but very fully: and the whole he comprehends in two general views: *He gave himſelf for our ſins*; and he gave himſelf for this important purpoſe, *that he might deliver us from a preſent evil world.*

No body, ſure, will need to be told, that the particle rendered *for* in our tranſlation, does not bear the ſame meaning in theſe two propoſitions, which yet expreſs the ſame thing, only in different views; viz. Chriſt gave himſelf for *us*; and, Chriſt gave himſelf for our *ſins*. The firſt ſets him forth as the ranſom, the price or means of our redemption

demption and deliverance from the power of death; and in this view he is very juſtly ſaid to have purchaſed for himſelf a peculiar people, who are no more their own, being bought with a price; redeemed, not with ſilver or gold, or ſuch corruptible things, but with the precious blood of the Son of God. And the right is indiſputably good, as raiſing the dead man is very nearly the ſame with creating the man who is thus raiſed. Again, when he is ſaid to have given himſelf for our *ſins*, this expreſſion ſets him forth directly under the notion of a ſacrifice appointed for the putting away of ſin, which ſubjected all mankind to death, and holds them under it, until it be deſtroyed. That the death or diſſolution of the body is the effect of ſin, is generally acknowledged. But by the view this ſame Apoſtle gives of it, Eph. ii. 1. 2. 3. ſin itſelf is really the death of the ſoul, which is the principal and moſt noble part of the man. It ſeparates, and thereby cuts off the ſoul from God, the father of ſpirits, and the only fountain of life, the very ſubſtance of the ſpiritual world; and thus renders it utterly incapable of living as pure ſpirits do, with reſpect

ſpect either to the buſineſs and employment, or to the enjoyments and gratifications of the ſpiritual life. It is eaſy to ſee how both theſe expreſſions, viz. Chriſt giving himſelf for us, and giving himſelf for our ſins, concur in furniſhing us with a complete repreſentation of the Chriſtian ſtate, as all the parts of it, both privileges and duties, ariſe as naturally and neceſſarily out of this new creation, as the original duties did out of the firſt.

For, in the *firſt* place, it is evident, That all who are thus redeemed from ſin and death by Jeſus Chriſt, muſt be his abſolute property, whom he has a juſt and perfect right to diſpoſe of, and employ in what manner his perfect wiſdom ſees fit and proper. He is their ſovereign Lord, as we ſee the Apoſtle calls him, verſ. 3.; nor is there any room left them to diſpute or put in remonſtrances or exceptions to any of his orders. Perfect ſubmiſſion to his ſupreme authority is all that is left for them. The leaſt alteration, either by adding or diminiſhing in the order he has eſtabliſhed, is ſo far renouncing his authority, and ſetting up our own wiſdom, which

which is too generally regulated by our ill-governed wills, in oppoſition to his.

What the Apoſtle here adds, of our Lord's further intention, in giving himſelf for our ſins, completes the view of the Chriſtian's ſtate, very properly called *a ſtate of grace*; which the Apoſtle calls the grace wherein believers ſtand; which we find him always oppoſing to the ſtate of thoſe who are under law; and particularly the Jews, who were under that of Moſes, Rom. vi. 14. This completing view of grace the Apoſtle expreſſes by Chriſt's *delivering* his people *from this preſent evil world*. Literally, it is taking them out of it. The word the Apoſtle uſes here is that by which the different ſtates of mankind, before and after our Lord's coming in the fleſh, are denoted. So the Apoſtle calls the time of Chriſt's kingdom, *the world to come*, Heb. ii. 5.; where he uſes a different word. Hence, ſome have thought, that the Apoſtle had the Jewiſh ſtate under the Moſaic law in his eye; and that he means to tell thoſe who wanted ſo much to be under that diſpenſation, that when Chriſt gave himſelf for ſin, there was an end put to that diſpenſation,

ſation, and that it was his deſign to take his people out of that ſtate, and bring them into that which in thoſe times was called *the world to come.*

That this was one part of our Lord's deſign in giving himſelf, every Chriſtian will readily allow, and that it very well anſwers the Apoſtle's views in this epiſtle. But beſides that, however the inſtitutions of the Moſaic law, on which the Jewiſh ſtate was founded, are called weak and unprofitable, and really were ſo; on which account they were removed to make way for a better conſtitution and church ſtate, eſtabliſhed on better promiſes; yet it neither was, nor ever was called, *evil in itſelf*; but became ſo only by the miſapplication and abuſe of it. And though it ſhould be allowed, that the Old-Teſtament ſtate might be called evil, thoſe whom the Apoſtle was writing to were Gentiles, who never had any concern with the Jewiſh ſtate; and therefore could never, with any propriety of ſpeech, be ſaid to be delivered from, or taken out of, a world which they never were in.

When we conſider further, that the word here rendered *world*, is often and almoſt always

always uſed in the ſame ſenſe with another, which uniformly ſignifies the preſent world, the whole frame of nature, as mankind ſtand connected with it, in oppoſition to that world which is ſpiritual and eternal, except where it is diſtinguiſhed by particular circumſtances; the moſt natural interpretation of what the Apoſtle ſays here, will be that which he gives us in this ſame epiſtle; when he ſays, "he "was crucified to the world, and the "world was crucified to him." Thus he was effectually taken out of it. The courſe of it, after which the men of the world, the natural children of Adam, walk, Eph. ii. 3. had no more influence on him. He, and all true Chriſtians, are crucified with Chriſt; have from him and in him a new life; are begotten and born again into a new world, the ſpiritual and eternal one; and, by his Spirit dwelling in them, learn to live as ſpirits do, on that fullneſs of God which dwells in him. Chriſt is all to them; they need no more; and to him belongs all the glory, and to him they heartily and willingly give it all: as the Apoſtle does, verſ. 5. *To him be the glory for ever and ever.*

Of all the duties of worſhip which men owe their Creator, Redeemer, and conſtant Benefactor, that of giving him the glory due unto his name, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it, is the moſt natural, and, at the ſame time, the moſt comprehenſive. It is that which is moſt worthy of God, and moſt becoming the creature; it makes a neceſſary ingredient in all the duties of religion, and is the very eſſence of praiſe and thankſgiving; it mixes even with all the actions of common life; and where-ever it is wanting, there muſt be ſomething amiſs; that is, ſome degree of ſin in the moſt innocent, and even the beſt actions. The Apoſtle's rule is a full proof of this: "Whether therefore ye eat or "drink, do all to the glory of God," 1 Cor. x. 31. Giving God the glory of his name, ſuppoſes the knowledge of it, or, which is the ſame thing, the knowledge of God as he is manifeſted and diſcovered to us: and that is only done by ſuch works and ways of his as are brought under our obſervation. Praiſes and thankſgivings, the only way by which we directly give glory to him, always ſuppoſe ſomething we praiſe, and give him thanks

thanks for. And to give him the glory due unto his name, must carry in it a full conviction and acknowledgement, that he really is such a God as he has shown himself to be in all his works and ways; that is, as creator, preserver, and governor, of the world; but especially as he has manifested himself in Jesus Christ, and all the riches of his sovereign grace and merciful kindness to mankind; with the impressions which the believing views of them necessarily make on the heart, filling it with the warmest gratitude and love. These are the sacrifices which God has chosen; and which accordingly we find him, Psal. l. preferring to all the most costly offerings under the Old-Testament dispensation.

CHAP. i. 6.——10.

6. I marvel, that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel: 7. Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ: 8. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have

received, let him be accurſed. 10. *For do I now perſuade men, or God? or do I ſeek to pleaſe men? for if I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt.*

IN theſe verſes the Apoſtle enters on the main ſubject of his epiſtle, intended to recover thoſe Galatians, whom, by his preaching among them, he had converted from Heathen ignorance and idolatry, to the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, and the knowledge of the true God in and through him. He had been taking a view of the aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion and grace of God to a periſhing ſinful world, demonſtrated in the ſtrongeſt manner, by putting away ſin, by the ſacrifice of his Son, *that he might deliver them from this preſent evil world*, that is, from the power of Satan, into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, and a comfortable and honourable ſtanding in the grace and favour of the living God. Warmed, as a heart like his muſt have been, with theſe affecting views, he could not miſs ſtating the caſe with a more than ordinary degree of warmth, which yet he moderates with great tenderneſs and caution.

The

The Galatians were indeed deeply guilty, but thoſe who had ſeduced them were greatly more ſo. Againſt theſe laſt therefore he points the higheſt indignation; while he only wonders how the others could be ſo ſoon prevailed with to make a change ſo much to their detriment and loſs.

Verſ. 6. *I marvel*, &c.

No wiſe man will wonder at any thing but what is very extraordinary, and ſurpriſes, not only with the novelty, but the uncommonneſs and unaccountableneſs of the event. And ſurely ſuch a man as Paul, who knew ſo much of human nature, and had ſuch an extenſive knowledge of the world, would not *marvel* at any thing without very great reaſon. What this was, he ſtates very fairly, though in few words, verſ. 6. It was, that theſe Galatians *were ſo ſoon removed from him that called them into the grace of Chriſt unto another goſpel.* So our tranſlators render his words, plainly enough; but interpreters are greatly divided about what is the true ſenſe of the words which he uſes. Could it be determined with certainty whom the Apoſtle means by *him*

that

that called them, the other differences would be eaſily adjuſted.

Some interpreters of great note have imagined, that the Apoſtle means himſelf, as by his miniſtry they were called, and brought into the grace of Jeſus Chriſt; and that the matter of his complaint was, that they were, by their new teachers, drawn off from that love and reſpect they had ſhown to him and his doctrine, when he was among them. And they think themſelves pretty ſtrongly ſupported by what he ſays, chap. iv. 12. *et ſeqq.* But it is hard to believe, that ſuch a man as Paul, who would not allow any thing done by him of all his labours to be owing to himſelf, but to the Spirit and grace of God in him; that ſuch a man ſhould introduce himſelf into ſuch a ſolemn ſcene as that which he here preſents to the Galatians. What he ſays of himſelf any where through this epiſtle, is evidently deſigned to ſupport his character againſt the falſe teachers, who waited to ſink his credit, that they might the more eaſily deſtroy what he had taught them.

But if we reflect what the calling is which he here ſpeaks of, we will find, that

that it is ſomething of ſo high a nature, that it never is, any where in the ſacred record, nor indeed can be, attributed to any mere man whatſoever. It is, by the deſcription the Apoſtle gives of it, ſuch a calling as could bring thoſe who were called out of the Gentile world, where they were lying dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, under the influence of that malignant ſpirit which works effectually in the children of diſobedience; and inſtate them, or, in the ſame Apoſtle's phraſe, give them a ſtanding in the grace and favour of God, and a ſhare in all the happy fruits and effects of it. This, it is evident, is what none but God has either any right or power to do. He indeed in ordinary caſes doth make uſe of means and miniſters; but their only buſineſs is, to hold forth the word of life, or God's call; but the excellency of the power is of God, 1 Cor. iii. 5. and 2 Cor. iv. 7.

It muſt therefore be allowed, that they come nearer the truth who make Chriſt himſelf the caller he ſpeaks of, and thus render the words, *I marvel, that ye are ſo ſoon removing from Chriſt, who hath called you.* Thoſe who underſtand the genius of

of the language in which the Apoſtle wrote, will readily ſee, that there is not the leaſt violence done to his words by this conſtruction. It is true indeed, what is objected, that throughout the ſcripture-record, the calling of ſinners is repreſented as the peculiar work of God: but it is as true, that whatever the Father does, the Son does alſo; and that all power in heaven and in earth is given into his hand; inſomuch that in the whole buſineſs of bringing ſinners of mankind into his kingdom, the Father doth nothing but by the Son. All the fullneſs of grace and glory is lodged in his hand, to raiſe the dead, and quicken whom he will.

Upon the whole, it appears to be of no moment, whether we take God abſolutely conſidered, or Chriſt, to be the caller whom the Apoſtle means. Only the laſt ſeems to be moſt favoured by what he ſays of the falſe teachers; that their great crime lay in drawing off their diſciples from Chriſt, to build on ſome other foundation; and ſeems to be greatly favoured by the ſtate the Apoſtle gives of the caſe, viz. That they were removed from him that called them *unto another goſpel.* This

plainly

plainly ſays, that the term from which they removed was the goſpel which Paul preached. It would be a very groſs miſtake, if any ſhould think, what Paul in this epiſtle calls the goſpel, was only that particular point, of Chriſtians being freed from the yoke of the Jewiſh law, which they never were under. The goſpel which he preached was the goſpel of Chriſt; and called ſo, not only, or principally, becauſe it was committed by him to his apoſtles to be publiſhed throughout the world, but becauſe he was the ſubject of it, as we find this Apoſtle himſelf defining it, the goſpel of God, or good news he has ſent into the world, concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt, Rom. i. 1. 2. 3. And he tells us how he managed it, 1 Cor. iii. 10. Speaking of Chriſtians as a building, he ſays, he laid the foundation ſo as no man might lay another, which is Chriſt Jeſus. On this foundation, therefore, he had pitched the Galatians; and to be removed from his goſpel, was really the ſame thing as to be removed from Chriſt. And the word he uſes ſeems deſigned to anſwer this view; or, which is the ſame thing, their ſtanding in the grace of God: for no man can

ſtand there, but by ſtanding, or being built up in Chriſt. Removing is too weak to expreſs the import of it. It is taking any thing from one ſituation or place, and putting it in another, by ſome agent or other. The caſe exactly of theſe falſe teachers, who made it their buſineſs to ſhake them out of that place the goſpel of Chriſt had put them in, their ſtanding in Chriſt, and to ſet them upon the law. Paul's goſpel was, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* They ſaid not ſo: For, *unleſs a man be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, and keep his law, he cannot be ſaved.*

But at the ſame time that the Apoſtle expoſes the mad project their new teachers were upon, he treats the churches of Galatia with great tenderneſs and caution. He does not ſay, as our tranſlators do, that they were actually removed, or had already left their ſtanding in grace; but that they were removing; as we find him ſtating their caſe, chap. iv. 20.: that they were in ſuch an unſettled way, as made him ſtand in doubt of them. They were but new converts, and might eaſily be ſhaken by the bold pretenſions of thoſe who

who they had ſome reaſon to think ſhould have underſtood the way of ſalvation better than themſelves. As it was on theſe the blame lay, the Apoſtle does not ſpare them; but throughout the whole epiſtle, and particularly in the verſes following, deals very roundly with them, and with ſuch a ſeverity, as nothing could warrant but the cauſe he had vindicated, and the Holy Spirit, which directed him.

There is ſome difference among tranſlators about the 7th verſe. Many who ſeem to underſtand the original language beſt, think our tranſlation ſomewhat injurious to the Apoſtle, and not a juſt rendering of the words he uſes. They think it is not right to make the Apoſtle ſay, that the new teaching was another goſpel, and with the ſame breath, that it was not another; which can admit of no meaning, but that what he called *another*, was either the ſame, or was no goſpel at all. This laſt is indeed in ſome ſenſe true, but hardly conſiſtent with the view the Apoſtle gives of it, and the truth of the caſe. They did not reject the truth of the goſpel of Chriſt, but perverted it by a foreign mixture of ſuch things as marred,

if not deſtroyed at once, the ſimplicity and beauty, the power and efficacy, of the truth as it is in Jeſus. It is alledged further, that if the Apoſtle had deſigned to ſay what our tranſlation does, he would have kept the ſame word in both propoſitions as they do; but which, in the latter, he exchanges for another, of a very different ſignification, and which is commonly uſed to different purpoſes. Upon the whole, they judge, that ἄλλο, in the 7th verſe, relates not only to another goſpel, but the whole of what he had ſaid of their being removing into it, which he ſays is nothing elſe, *but that there were ſome who troubled them, &c.*

The difference is of no great moment. What concerns us more is, to conſider the account he gives of thoſe new teachers they had got among them; that they were troubling them, and would pervert the goſpel of Chriſt. The words are too weak for conveying the emphaſis of thoſe the Apoſtle uſes. The word rendered *troubling* ſtrongly expreſſes the diſturbance which theſe people made in the churches wherever they came; and which the bringing in of new doctrines, differing from the goſpel of Chriſt, will always do. The leaſt

leaſt effect, which yet is no ſmall evil, is, diſquieting the minds even of honeſt Chriſtians with doubts and difficulties, which they may be but ill able to overcome. When debates and diſputes riſe, parties are formed, Chriſtian love greatly weakened, and party-zeal degenerates into ſomething very near enmity and hatred; diviſions and ſchiſms become unavoidable, and the body of Chriſt is torn in pieces; and, which is worſe, the members tear and devour one another, as the Apoſtle expreſſes it, chap. v. 15.; and it is well if they do not deſtroy one another. The wiſe man's obſervation about ſtrife and contention has been often fatally verified. "The be-"ginning of it is like the breaking in of "water;" ſo ſmall a matter, that it ſeems hardly worth minding; but by degrees gathers ſuch ſtrength, as makes the damage it does abſolutely irreparable.

What the Apoſtle adds, as the occaſion of theſe diſturbances in the Galatian churches, viz. that theſe falſe teachers *would* pervert the goſpel of Chriſt, in the tranſlation is much too faint. The word the Apoſtle uſes, which our tranſlators render *would*, ſtrongly expreſſes a fixed determined ſtate of the will; that the

the unhappy men were ſo reſolutely bent on what the Apoſtle calls *perverting the goſpel of Chriſt*, that they exerted the utmoſt of their powers to accompliſh what they ſo earneſtly wiſhed. A pitiful view this gives us of the weakneſs of human nature, with all the boaſted powers ſome would perſuade us it is inveſted with; eaſily drawn into miſtake and error, and obſtinately bigotted to the very worſt of them; ſo that all the reaſon and authority in the univerſe cannot, not to ſay reclaim, but ſo much as moderate, their conduct.

And what was it theſe unhappy men were ſo heartily engaged in? Why, truly, what no man who knows what he is about, can ſo much as think of without horror, *perverting the goſpel of Chriſt*. The Apoſtle's word is very ſignificant. It is to change the goſpel into ſomething which it was not, until they took it into their hands. That is ſuch a dreadful thing, that no man in his wits will attempt directly. But theſe ſeducers were not the only perſons who perſuaded themſelves, and attempted to perſuade others, that the goſpel of Chriſt is not what he made it, but ſomething elſe, which themſelves have

have invented, and called by that name. The different forms into which what they call the *goſpel* has been modelled, are ſo numerous, that a liſt of them could hardly be made in one volume; ſome of them we meet with in the after part of this epiſtle.

That which the Apoſtle has here in his view, uniting the obſervation of the law of Moſes with the faith of Chriſt, and making them both equally neceſſary, will be found the moſt plauſible, and what moſt may be ſaid in the defence of. And yet we find the Apoſtle boldly pronouncing a curſe on the defenders of it. And leſt any ſhould ſuſpect that his zeal for what he knew certainly to be truth, had carried him too far verſ. 8. he repeats it again verſ. 9. The terms are ſtrong, and need no commentary. The beſt that can be made would but weaken them. If *we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other goſpel unto you, than that which we have preached, let him be accurſed. As I ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, If any man preach any other doctrine to you, than that ye have received, let him be accurſed.* And it is impoſſible to pitch upon any higher authority for ſuch alterations,

Before

Before we go any farther, it may be proper to ſay ſomething of the nature of the curſe which the Apoſtle denounces here. And there are three remarkable inſtances by which we may form a judgement about it, without any danger of being miſtaken, viz. the original curſe pronounced on mankind in our firſt father, and the ground for his ſake; the curſe annexed to the Moſaic law, and particular caſes under that diſpenſation, where certain perſons or things were devoted, or laid under the curſe; and the curſe which our bleſſed Redeemer kindly took upon himſelf. In all theſe caſes, the effect of the curſe was no leſs than the utter deſtruction of the ſubject on which it once reſted. When it fell on perſons, death was the conſequence, and that makes an end of the man. That is the caſe of all mankind. But when life was extinguiſhed, the law was fulfilled; for the curſe had done its buſineſs. The law has dominion over a man ſo long as he liveth; but when he is dead, he is no more a ſubject, and it has nothing to ſay to him; and the creator may, when he pleaſes, reſtore him to a new life. But as that is as much an

act

act of pure ſovereign grace, as the firſt creation was, he may with-hold it where he pleaſes; and in that caſe the man is bound for ever under that death under which the curſe bound him.

The caſe of Jeſus may be imagined an exception from this general rule: for he had no ſin, and of courſe could not be cut off from God, in which the ſpiritual death lies. It is true he had no ſin, and had a perfect right to life by the law, in the ſtricteſt tenor of it; and thence had power, ſuch as never another man had, to lay down his life, and to take it up again. Death neither had nor could have any power over him; nor was it in the power of any man to take his life from him. But he could lay it down, as he did on the croſs; a kind of death which God, in the proſpect of this grand event, had pronounced a curſe upon. And as he ſubmitted to the deſtruction of all that life which he derived from Adam; ſo when, by his office of prieſthood, he had taken upon himſelf the ſins of all who come to him in that character, in order to put them away, he appears to have taſted pretty deeply in the ſpiritual death, when he cried out, "My God

" my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?"

This by the way accounts perfectly for his agony in the garden, and his repeated earneſt prayer, that " if it was poſſible " that cup might paſs from him;" which affords a full anſwer to the reproach caſt upon him by a ſort of men who know no more of him but the name, viz. that he did not ſhow half the firmneſs and reſolution that many of thoſe did who ſuffered for his ſake. He knew perfectly the pleaſure and happineſs of the ſpiritual life, and the way of living on God; the conſequences too of being ſeparated from him: no wonder the dreadful proſpect put him into the greateſt agony, however ſhort the time might be of its continuance. They who ſuffered for his ſake, were ſo far from any ſuch proſpect, that they found themſelves perfectly ſecured againſt it; and the worſt they had to fear was, the loſs of what they had already renounced, a periſhing life, and the equally periſhing gratifications and enjoyments of it, and ſome ſhort bodily torment, which ſhould introduce them into " the " joy of their Lord."

Attempts have been made to dwindle away

away the import of this curſe, into a church-cenſure which went under that name. And the rather, that the account he gives of thoſe againſt whom he denounces it, appears to extend very far, and takes in numbers whom they are very loath to condemn. It does indeed extend very far; for they are not only ſuch, in his account, who teach or preach any thing *contrary to* the goſpel of Chriſt, which he had preached to them, and they had received; but ſuch as teach any thing *beſides* it, for that is his word; that is to ſay, who ſhould paſs any thing upon their hearers or readers for goſpel, which is not really the goſpel of Chriſt. And what numbers of men, beſides thoſe whom the Apoſtle had in his eye, will fall under this condemnation! Nor will it mend the matter, that the Apoſtle means no more than excommunication, or cutting them off from the communion of the faithful; ſince no man may be thus cut off, but for ſuch conduct as God and his bleſſed Son have denounced eternal damnation againſt, even the curſe in its utmoſt extent.

If any ſhould take it into their head to aſk the ſame queſtion about Paul that

was put to his maſter, By what authority he did thoſe things, ſince none but the ſovereign of the univerſe has either authority to denounce, or power to inflict, ſuch a curſe? the anſwer is eaſy: He did it by the ſame authority by which he proclaimed and publiſhed the goſpel; that is, by his authority who hath the keys of hell and of death; and he did no more than his maſter had done before, when he gave his apoſtles authority, to go and preach the goſpel to every creature, with this ſanction, "He that believeth, ſhall be ſaved; "and he that believeth not, ſhall be damn-"ed."

By this very warm declaration of his ſentiments, he effectually obviates what we find by chap. v. 11. the falſe teachers had attempted to perſuade the Galatians of, viz. that Paul himſelf was a promoter of circumciſion; which he tells them, chap. vi. 12. they inſiſted on for no other reaſon, but to get favour from the unbelieving Jews, that they might avoid perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt. This is the true key to what he ſays, verſ. 10.; *For do I now perſuade men, or God?* &c. the meaning of which, as it ſtands in our tranſlation,

tranſlation, it is not eaſy to apprehend, or to perceive how the Apoſtle brings it in here. The word he uſes does indeed properly ſignify *perſuade*; and where-ever we meet with it, it always denotes ſome kind of perſuaſion, or that the perſon who attempts it carries the point he aims at. What that was in his caſe, himſelf points us to, by the particle *now*, with which he introduces it; and which plainly enough refers, not only to what he was ſaying then, but to the whole of his conduct in publiſhing the goſpel of Chriſt. On this he puts the queſtion concerning the point he had in view. Our tranſlators have given us the true ſenſe of it, Acts xii. 20. where we meet with the ſame word, which, if literally tranſlated, as they do here, would be, "Thoſe of Tyre and "Sidon *perſuaded* Blaſtus the King's cham-"berlain;" which would have left the thing altogether uncertain, as indeed it is in the text before us; and therefore they very judiciouſly rendered it by what they perſuaded him to, namely, "That they made "Blaſtus their friend;" which was the point they aimed at.

Thus the Apoſtle's queſtion is plain, and

and home to the purpoſe. What is, and what can be my intention? what do or can I propoſe by the whole of my conduct? Is it to pleaſe God, and ſecure his friendſhip, or to curry favour with men? And what he adds in the laſt part of the verſe, ſufficiently determines the ſenſe of the queſtion, and at the ſame time gives the only conſiſtent anſwer that can be made to it: *If I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of God.* The reaſon is plain from what our Lord himſelf ſaid, Matth. vi. 24. "No man can ſerve two "maſters," &c. The choice in theory, one would think, ſhould not be hard to make. There can be no compariſon, much leſs any competition, between God, the creator, ſovereign, and judge, and the whole world of mankind, though they were all united in one body. But when it comes to the practice, God on one ſide, and the world on the other, lamentable experience witneſſes what a weight the latter bears in the deciſion.

CHAP. i. 11.——24.

11. *But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me, is not after man.* 12. *For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.* 13. *For ye have heard of my conversation in time past, in the Jews religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:* 14. *And profited in the Jews religion, above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.* 15. *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace,* 16. *To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:* 17. *Neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.* 18. *Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem, to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.* 19. *But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* 20. *Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not.* 21. *Afterwards I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia;* 22. *And was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea, which were in Christ:* 23. *But they had heard only, that he which persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed.* 24. *And they glorified God in me.*

THE Apostle had asserted, in his address of the epistle, that he was neither sent and commissioned by men, nor had received his commission to the office

office of an Apoſtle from men at ſecond hand, but directly and immediately from God, and his ever-bleſſed Son. This was a point of great moment, as the credit and authority of that goſpel which he preached, in a great meaſure depended on it; and which accordingly he ſets himſelf, in the remaining part of this and in the following chapter, to ſupport by undeniable facts. By which it appears, with great evidence, that it was impoſſible he could have it any other way, but by direct and immediate revelation. And he brings it in according to his natural and eaſy manner, by which he makes one thing to introduce another, as if he was only purſuing the ſame thought. He had ſtrongly aſſerted, that he had never made it his buſineſs to pleaſe men, but, as became a faithful ſervant, to execute his maſter's orders as he had received them; not daring, as ſome did, to ſerve their own purpoſes by the goſpel of Chriſt; ſee 2 Cor. ii. 17. "We are not as many which *cor-*" *rupt* the word of God." The word literally ſignifies, acting like taverners.

He begins, verſ. 11. with laying down the propoſition he meant to prove, in very plain

plain and positive terms, and in such a way as should leave no room, either for the Galatians, or their seducers, to pretend ignorance, or make any hesitation or doubt about it, as a thing they were not sufficiently apprised of, and which is very well rendered, by *certifying* them. His certification consists of two parts, or one assertion confirmed by two particulars. The general assertion is, That the gospel which he delivered to them was not after man; and the proof of it is, That he did not receive it from men; neither was taught it any other way but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What the Apostle says of his gospel, that it was *not after man*, may be constructed to refer either to the matter of which it consisted, or the manner in which the knowledge of it was conveyed to him. In the first view it is as much as if he had said, that what he taught neither was, nor could be, discovered by man; for this plain reason, that the whole of the facts on which it stands, and the hopes which it discovers, are of such a nature as it was impossible for any human creature to have invented, being such as no eye e-

ver ſaw, nor ear heard, nor did they ever enter into the heart of man to conceive.

Theſe are all the ways which man has to come to the knowledge of any thing. He can perceive nothing but what falls within the compaſs of his ſenſes. No man can inform another of what has never fallen within his own obſervation; nor is it poſſible for him to conceive of any thing which lies altogether beyond his reach. The Apoſtle's reaſoning is ſtrong and concluſive, 1 Cor. ii. 11. "What man "knoweth the things of a man," his inward ſentiments and purpoſes eſpecially, "but "the ſpirit of man that is in him?" How abſurd then muſt it be, to pretend to know the things of God, his mind and purpoſes, unleſs they be revealed by his Spirit?

The goſpel of Chriſt is not after man in another view, viz. It is not at all concerted on the plan and meaſures of human wiſdom. It was arrant folly in the eyes of the wiſe and learned Greeks, and a ſtumbling-block to the Jews. Nor need we go ſo far for evidence, when we have enough of it among thoſe who have the higheſt reputation for wiſdom and learning,

learning, among thoſe who claim the name of Chriſtians, and yet cannot digeſt the goſpel of Chriſt in its native ſimplicity, until they have new-modelled it according to their ſeveral taſtes.

It ſhould, one would think, require no great penetration, to be aſſured, that the goſpel, as Chriſt and his apoſtles have ſtated it, cannot poſſibly owe its riſe to human invention. But it is the other view, which relates to the manner in which he came to the knowledge of it, which he ſeems eſpecially to have in his eye; that he did not receive it as men do their knowledge, by one another, and being inſtructed and taught, as all human knowledge of facts, and even the arts and ſciences, are for the moſt part. And if this was really the caſe, there was no other way of coming to the knowledge of it but by revelation.

That he was not, nor could be taught of man, he proves, verſ. 12. 13. & 14. with great evidence, by the hiſtory of his life, both before he began to preach the goſpel, and after. In the former part of his life, he was ſo far from receiving any bias in favour of Chriſtianity, that the whole courſe

of his education immerſed him in the ſtrongeſt prejudices againſt it. He was born of Jewiſh parents, (an *Hebrew of the Hebrews*, as he deſigns himſelf in another place); and theſe it would ſeem of no mean rank; for he was ſent from Tarſus to Jeruſalem, and ſtudied under the doctor of greateſt reputation, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. He did not loſe his time there; for he advanced in the knowledge of his religion above moſt of his equals, and formed his conduct upon it. He entered himſelf into the ſect of the Phariſees, the ſtricteſt of any in their profeſſion; and as their diſtinguiſhing character was a great zeal for the law, and eſpecially the traditions pretended to be handed down from their fathers, and even Moſes himſelf, ſurely Paul was not like to learn the goſpel of Chriſt there, or even to contract any favourable notions of that way. So far from it, that, along with his knowledge of their law, he imbibed the ſtrongeſt prejudices in its favour, and outdid, not only the bulk of the nation, but even the Phariſees themſelves, in his zeal for their traditions; which he carried to the moſt enormous height, by perſecuting and laying

laying waſte the church of God; the hiſtory of which is given us ſo fully, and confirmed by himſelf in the Acts of the Apoſtles, that it is needleſs to inſiſt on it here.

One can hardly paſs the account the Apoſtle here gives of himſelf, without reflecting on the aſtoniſhing weakneſs of human nature, even with all the advantages one can be poſſeſſed of, or acquire. Never man poſſeſſed greater natural abilities, and no man in that age had better opportunities for improving them. He had Moſes and the prophets, the great treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge, and ſpent his early youth in the ſtudy of them; and yet was carried off from the great deſign and whole intention of them, by his attachment to what was called *the traditions of their fathers.*

We ſhould have been quite at a loſs about theſe ſame traditions, had it not been for what the Evangeliſts have recorded, and our Lord himſelf has ſaid about them. They were very exact in ſmall matters, and added a number of trifling obſervations, which the law never required, and in the mean time neglected the weightier matters; nay, which

was

was yet worſe, they made the law of God itſelf void, and ſet it aſide, even in ſome of the plaineſt points, by theſe traditions of theirs. But what was worſt of all, by a pretended religious zeal for what they took to be the letter of the law, they loſt the ſpirit, and what was the very deſign of the whole, to point out and direct men to Chriſt. This was the unhappy ſtate of this very great man. His zeal for what he miſtook for the law, ſpent itſelf againſt what both the law and the prophets atteſted, and was deſigned to lead men to, viz. Jeſus Chriſt, and the way of ſalvation and eternal life through him. Inſtead of that warmth of love to God and man, which is the root and fountain of all true zeal, that excellent thing was deformed into a furious party-rage, while the deluded bigot thought he was doing God good ſervice, and was executing the juſt vengeance found written in his word againſt the blaſphemers of his law. And happy had it been for mankind, had the black mark he has ſet upon his own conduct, been made a warning to others who came after him, and have followed the ſame ſteps.

Such

Such was this extraordinary man in the firſt part of his life; extraordinary every way. He was carried out to extraordinary oppoſition to Chriſt and his goſpel by his unbounded zeal for what he took to be the law of Moſes; he was deſigned for extraordinary work, to carry the goſpel of this ſame Jeſus to the Heathen nations; and he was converted and commiſſioned in a moſt extraordinary manner. He does not enter into the particulars of his converſion, as thoſe he wrote to, he knew, were no ſtrangers to them. But the ſhort account he gives of it, verſ. 15. & 16. though it appears to ſtand here only as an introduction to what he was going to ſay in proſecution of his argument, is yet very inſtructive to us, and tends not a little to ſtrengthen his reaſoning, with a ſolemnity which muſt have great weight with all who have any thing of a regard for God.

He begins with God's care about him as early as his coming into the world, as it was he who *ſeparated him from his mother's womb.* This very naturally leads a reader into the ſame way of thinking with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxii. 9. 10.; and ſeems to be the genuine meaning of the Apoſtle's words,

words, and as agreeable to his preſent purpoſe as what ſome critics would have us to underſtand by it, viz. his being ſeparated to the office of an apoſtle. This laſt indeed agrees well enough with the context; but it will be very hard to ſay what occaſion there was for mentioning his mother's womb, when it was ſo many years after his birth that he was thus ſeparated from the profane community, nay, that he appeared one of the worſt of them, until it pleaſed the ſame God whoſe providential care had brought him into the world, *to reveal his Son in him.*

This phraſe may admit of two conſtructions, ſo as to denote, either his own converſion, or his being called to and qualified for the office of an apoſtle; for this revelation of Chriſt in him might have been deſigned, either for himſelf, and his own benefit, or for the behoof of the Heathen nations to whom he was ſent: and what he introduces it with, *his being called by the grace of God*, may be with equal propriety applied to both; as the ſtate of mankind is ſuch, that, in the courſe of common juſtice, they have nothing to expect from the creator but the natural wages of ſin. Whatever favour, or even reſpite

ſpite and forbearance, they meet with from him, muſt go to the account of free and unmerited, and therefore abſolutely ſovereign grace, ſuch as he might have denied them, not only without any injuſtice done them, but with all the reaſon in the world.

If we underſtand this calling and revealing his Son in him, of his firſt converſion, never was there a higher inſtance of perfectly ſovereign grace, whether we conſider the demerits of the perſon, or the way it pleaſed the ſovereign to take with him. In the firſt view, Paul gives ſuch an account of himſelf, in the foregoing verſes, as would have engaged any one, endued with but a moderate proportion of modern zeal, to mark him out for everlaſting vengeance, and even to expect ſome ſignal token of it in this world. But God, who is rich in mercy, had other views; and even when he was in the height of his wickedneſs, and breathing out threatenings againſt the followers of Jeſus, Jeſus himſelf appears to him in his glory, rebukes his blind rage, and at once ſubdues his haughty ſpirit into the moſt

humble ſubjection: *Lord*, ſaid he, *what wilt thou have me to do?*

Thus God revealed his Son *to* him; but at the ſame time he revealed his Son *in* him. Thus we find this ſame Apoſtle deſcribing the Chriſtian ſtate, Col. i. 27. as the effect of God's making known the myſtery of his grace to the Gentiles, by which they come to be joined to the Lord, ſo as to be "one ſpirit with him." Our Lord gives the ſtate of it, John xv. 4. 5. and xvii. 23. This is what makes the Chriſtian: And the Apoſtle determines poſitively, Rom. viii. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; nor can any reap ſaving advantage from Chriſt, unleſs he be in them. And if we take our meaſures by this Apoſtle, Gal. ii. 20. it is not ſo properly the Chriſtian that lives, as it is Chriſt that liveth in him. He is the Chriſtian's life; and it is by his Spirit they ſubſiſt in him; one ſpirit, one life, one mind, and one way of living.

But however neceſſary this calling, and this revealing of Chriſt, may be, and certainly is, to make a right Chriſtian; yet it is the calling him to be an apoſtle, and revealing Chriſt in him, as a choſen veſſel,

to

to hold him forth to others, that Paul has here more especially in his eye, 2 Cor. iv. 7.: for the design of it, he tells us, was, *that he might preach him among the Heathen.* And, in this view, there are two things which merit particular consideration, viz. revealing Christ in him, and his commission to preach him to the Gentiles.

When Peter, in answer to his Master's question, confessed him to be "the Christ, "the Son of the living God," Matth. xvi. 16. Jesus told him, that "flesh and blood "had not revealed this to him, but his "Father who is in heaven." This is so palpably true, that however high men have carried their pretensions toward the knowledge of the being and character of a Deity, none ever pretended to make this discovery. It would never have entered into any one's head, that God should have a Son; or, if he should, that this same Son, which even common sense teaches us should be at least of the same nature, should be manifested in the likeness of sinful flesh, and become the Saviour of the world. This fact, with the system of grace built upon it, is one of those things, the very existence of which, among such

beings as men are well known to be, carries the irrefragable evidence of a ſupernatural original. Some imperfect fragments of it have been in the world ever ſince there were any men in it; and it would have been ſtrange if there had not, on the ſuppoſition of an original divine revelation; but the whole conſiſtent ſyſtem was totally loſt throughout the whole Gentile world. It ſubſiſted indeed perfect in the Jewiſh books; but in effect only there, and in ſome few who formed their religion upon the divine revelation recorded in theſe books. But the learned and reputed wiſe maſters among the Jews had in effect explained it away, and made it void by their traditions; inſomuch that when Chriſt came into the world, they were ſo far from receiving him, while yet they profeſſed to be waiting for his appearance, that they condemned him as a blaſphemer, for ſaying thoſe very things which their Meſſiah or Chriſt muſt have ſaid whenever he came into the world.

Paul himſelf was as much involved in the national prejudices as any of them, when it pleaſed God to reveal his Son in him. The appearance of Jeſus to him,

him, in the light of his glory, and thus ſupporting his pretenſions, was enough to convince him, that he was indeed the very perſon he gave himſelf out to be. But how a rational man ſhould at once have had all his fixed ſentiments unhinged and changed, his deeply-rooted prejudices removed, and, what is greatly more, clear, comprehenſive, and diſtinct views, of an infinitely comprehenſive ſyſtem directly oppoſite; a ſyſtem which has no foundation at all in our reaſoning powers, but is even contrary to all the meaſures which the wiſdom of the world has in all ages fixed on, and is to this day pertinaciouſly inſiſted on by numbers who are accounted the wiſe and learned; and (which adds greatly to the wonder) that all this ſhould have been effected almoſt inſtantaneouſly, who can forbear putting the queſtion that Nicodemus put on a ſimilar occaſion, "How "can theſe things be?" There is only one anſwer, but it is a complete one, viz. What is impoſſible with man, is eaſy with God. And they muſt have very low notions indeed of divine power, who can reckon it either impoſſible, or even difficult, for him who inſpired man at his formation

formation with reaſon and underſtanding, to convey what meaſures of knowledge, and in what manner, he pleaſes. Paul himſelf is one indiſputable evidence; and the fiſhermen of Galilee, on the day of Pentecoſt, furniſh many more; nay, as moſt of thoſe who were converted, even from the groſſeſt Heathen ignorance, were inſtantaneouſly enabled to ſpeak with tongues they had never been taught, and to declare fluently and diſtinctly the wonderful works of God, how amazing was this! But it was the Spirit of God which gave them utterance; and that leaves nothing to wonder at, but the divine condeſcenſion beſtowing ſuch gifts on men.

But, might the Jewiſh teachers ſay, (and it ſeems they did ſay it), how does it appear that this Paul, who had been preaching to them, had his goſpel, and his commiſſion of apoſtleſhip, thus directly and immediately from God? The knowledge of Chriſt was then in a manner a common thing; might he not have been taught it himſelf, as he taught others? And as, by his own account, Ananias was ſent to him,

him, why might he not have been inſtructed by him?

It is true, many were commiſſioned by our Lord himſelf, no fewer than ſeventy at one time; but Paul was none of them. It is likely enough too, that many were ſent out by the apoſtles: but neither was he any of thoſe; for he ſaw none of them, until three years after he had been preaching the goſpel at Damaſcus and in Arabia, the very ſame goſpel which he preached to the Galatians. Then he ſays, verſ. 18. & 19. he *went up to Jeruſalem to ſee Peter, and abode fifteen days with him; but ſaw none other of the apoſtles, ſave James*, whom he calls *the Lord's brother*, to diſtinguiſh him from James the ſon of Zebedee, and the ſame who was called the ſon of Alpheus, and whoſe brother the Apoſtle Jude was. It ſeems the reſt of the apoſtles were not then at Jeruſalem, but employed in propagating the goſpel in other places, and, according to ſome ancient writers, in many and ſome very remote countries. But that could not be ſo early, as we find Cornelius and his friends were the firſt Gentiles who were brought into the church of Chriſt; nay, that Peter, (which ſeems very

ry ſtrange), notwithſtanding the very plain Old-Teſtament promiſes, would not have been prevailed with to go to Cornelius, unleſs he had been expreſsly commanded of God.

By the Apoſtle's confirming this account he gives of himſelf, with the ſolemnity of at leaſt ſomething equivalent to an oath, verſ. 20. it may be certainly concluded, that he had ſome very momentous purpoſe to anſwer by it. It is evident, that he could not have the goſpel which he preached at Damaſcus and Arabia from any of the apoſtles, as he had then ſeen none of them. Neither could he have an apoſtolic commiſſion from Peter and James: for beſides that their number was full, by the election of Matthias, Paul was not qualified according to the eſtabliſhed rule: for ſo far was he from "having accompanied with Jeſus from the "beginning," that he had never accompanied him at all; but even after his death and reſurrection, had been a moſt violent perſecutor of his church. At any rate, they could not give him a commiſſion to go to the Gentiles, when themſelves were not clear about the matter till ſome years after.

after. And leaſt of all could they authoriſe him in what was peculiarly his goſpel, exempting the Gentile converts from the law of Moſes, when that was a diſputed point at leaſt fourteen years after?

As for Ananias, it could not be pretended, that he gave him any powers to act as an apoſtle, when himſelf was none. Saul was indeed directed to go forward to Damaſcus, where it ſhould be told him what he was to do. But it was not told him, that he ſhould receive theſe inſtructions, either from Ananias, or any other man. Nor did Ananias himſelf receive any inſtructions to give him, but was only ordered to go and reſtore him his ſight, and to baptize him, in this view, That he was a choſen veſſel, to hold forth the immenſe treaſure of the goſpel of Chriſt. As for the reſt, Ananias knew, that Jeſus had appeared to him on the way: and it may well be preſumed, that he underſtood his buſineſs better than to interfere without ſpecial orders, where ſuch a teacher had been beforehand with him; who, he certainly knew, was well able to perfect what he had in ſuch a miraculous manner begun.

But however that might be, it was impoſſible for one in Saul's circumſtances to acquire the neceſſary knowledge in ſo little time, by any human inſtruction whatſoever. For no ſooner was he brought into the Chriſtian community, than he ſet about preaching Chriſt in the ſynagogue, to the amazement of all who heard him, as we read, Acts ix. 20. 21. The ſame account he gives of himſelf here, verſ. 16. *Immediately I conferred not with fleſh and blood*; as much as to ſay, he did not deliberate a moment, either to conſult his own eaſe and conveniency, or to adviſe with others. He ſaid to Jeſus, when he convinced him of his folly, "Lord, what "wilt thou have me to do?" And when he was told what he was to do, he fell about it without either demur or delay. This is ſo plainly his meaning, that it ſeems quite needleſs to diſpute about what he ſhould mean by *fleſh and blood*, as that expreſſion will be found to comprehend all the means of worldly wiſdom, and the methods which men take to determine their conduct in caſes where they have ſo much at ſtake as the Apoſtle had. No man in the Jewiſh nation had a fairer

proſpect

proſpect than Paul. But, as he ſays, Phil. iii. 7. "what things were gain to him, "thoſe he counted loſs for Chriſt:" A caſe very nearly reſembling that of Moſes; "who choſe rather to ſuffer affliction with the people of God, than be "called the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter."

We have no where any account of Paul's preaching, either at Damaſcus or in Arabia; but that "he mightily convinced the "Jews;" or rather ſtrongly proved to them, "that Jeſus was the Chriſt." That was the capital point then in diſpute; and ſo comprehenſive, that they who underſtood it, and knew the character of Chriſt, and the buſineſs on which he came into the world, found in it a complete ſyſtem of religion. Only, by his way of ſpeaking in this epiſtle, of the invariable ſameneſs of the goſpel he preached, and that the Son of God was revealed in him, with this expreſs deſign, that he ſhould preach him among the Heathen, it ſeems pretty evident, that he received his firſt commiſſion at the time of his converſion, and immediately ſet about the execution of it, eſpecially among the Arabians; which might be an additional reaſon of the ſevere perſecution

ſecution intended againſt him at Damaſcus, where he was ſo narrowly watched, that there was no way of ſaving his life, but by letting him down by the wall in a baſket.

When he eſcaped to Jeruſalem, he run the ſame riſk there; and even a worſe; for we find, that the diſciples there were all afraid of him, and would not believe that he was a diſciple, until Barnabas was at pains to inform them better. And when the Jews there, and particularly the Jews from Greece, could not reſiſt the force of his reaſonings, they went about to kill him; which when the brethren knew, they conveyed him away, firſt to Ceſarea, and thence he went to Tarſus, his native city. And this is what he tells us here, verſ. 21. of his going into *the regions of Syria and Cilicia.*

But it muſt be remembered, that there was another and higher reaſon for this journey than this prudential caution of the brethren. For at this time muſt have happened what the Apoſtle tells the Jews, in his ſpeech to them, Acts xxii. 18.—21. where his maſter ordered him to depart quickly from Jeruſalem, "becauſe they "would

" would not receive his teſtimony;" but eſpecially that he was to be employed at a great diſtance " among the Gentiles." It is true, he was not ſent publicly, and with the knowledge of the whole church, until ſome time after his return from Tarſus, to Antioch in Syria. But on the intimation he had then given him, it is not at all likely, that he who had been ſo very zealous, even at the peril of his life, for ſupporting the truth " as it is in Jeſus," would be wanting to it now after receiving ſuch freſh encouragement. Though Galatia was one of the countries of Leſſer Aſia, as well as Cilicia; yet, as there were ſeveral countries lying between them, we have no warrant to think, as ſome have done, that the Apoſtle either preached or planted churches there at that time, nor until Barnabas brought him back to Antioch in Syria; whence both of them were, by expreſs divine appointment, ſeparated for this work. And as there is no mention of Barnabas, except their going together to Jeruſalem, it ſeems pretty certain, that they two were ſeparated before either of them ſet a foot in that country.

We need not ſtand on what he ſays,

verſ.

verſ. 22. that he *was not perſonally known to the churches of Judea which were in Chriſt.* They could have no acquaintance with him while he was perſecuting them; their buſineſs then was, to keep as much as poſſible out of his way; and after his converſion, he was never among any of them, but at Jeruſalem. They knew him only by report and hearſay; *that he who formerly was the perſecutor, was now a very zealous preacher of Chriſt.* And the effect of it deſerves our regard: *They glorified God in him.* Such was then the warmth of the Chriſtians love to Chriſt, that nothing which concerned him was indifferent to them. And ſo ſtrongly were they perſuaded, that all things were of God, that they looked beyond the inſtruments, however eminent their gifts and ſucceſs were; and to God they gave the glory of all: and very juſtly; for "all things are of "God, who hath reconciled us to himſelf "by Jeſus Chriſt, and committed to this "Apoſtle, and his aſſociates, the mini-"ſtry of reconciliation," to pray and beſeech a thoughtleſs world to be reconciled to God; which is the ſame thing as if God

God was doing it himſelf by his bleſſed Son in perſon, 2 Cor. v. 18. *et ſeqq.*

The term by which the Apoſtle expreſſes the ſubject of his preaching, in the cloſe of verſ. 23. has occaſioned no ſmall contention among the learned part of the Chriſtian world. He calls it *the faith*; and it ſeems that was the term then commonly uſed. As it is allowed by all, that it is the ſame with *belief*, the meaneſt day-labourer knows, as well as the moſt learned divine, that it is commonly uſed to expreſs what they believe, and the actual believing of it; or, as the ſchools ſpeak, the act of believing, and its object; and can eaſily diſtinguiſh when the one or the other is to be underſtood by that word. And one cannot help ſaying, that the learned labours of thoſe who have made it their buſineſs to explain it, have contributed more to darken a plain ſubject, and perplex common underſtandings, than to clear the important ſubject, which every man knows better than the moſt learned can define it.

No man can believe or not believe what and when he pleaſes. He muſt perceive the thing to be true, either by his own obſervation,

obſervation, or the teſtimony of others. Never was there any teſtimony which deſerved half ſo much regard as that does which God has given us in the record we have in our hands. The facts recorded there are of two kinds; what God has done, and what he has promiſed to do. By the firſt, his eternal power and godhead are ſet before us in the only way we can come to the knowledge of him; that is, by ſuch works and ways with his creatures as we can form ſome notion of. By the ſecond, we learn what we have to expect from him. And from both taken together, we may be enabled to form ſuch apprehenſions of the divine character, as may ſhew us what meaſures of regard and duty we owe him. This is the Chriſtian faith; and the belief of theſe facts is what makes a Chriſtian. And believed they cannot be, without producing ſuch meaſures of love to him, and confidence in him, as anſwer to the meaſures of our faith: and love is the fulfilling of the whole law; the whole of our obedience to his law being only the native effect and actings of love,

CHAP. ii.

CHAP. ii. 1.——10.

1. *Then, fourteen years after, I went up again to Jeru-*
salem, with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also.
2. *And I went up by revelation, and communicated*
unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gen-
tiles, but privately to them which were of reputa-
tion, lest by any means I should run, or had run in
vain. 3. *But neither Titus, who was with me, be-*
ing a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised: 4.
And that because of false brethren unawares brought
in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which
we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us
into bondage: 5. *To whom we gave place by sub-*
jection, no not for an hour; that the truth of the go-
spel might continue with you. 6. *But of these, who*
seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it
maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's per-
son) for they who seemed to be somewhat, in confer-
ence added nothing to me: 7. *But contrariwise, when*
they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was
committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision
was unto Peter; 8. *(For he that wrought effectual-*
ly in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the
same was mighty in me towards the Gentiles). 9.
And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to
be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto
me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of
fellowship; that we should go unto the Heathen, and
they unto the circumcision. 10. *Only they would that*
we should remember the poor; the same which I also
was forward to do.

THE Apostle here continues the account he had begun to give of himself in the foregoing chapter; and with

the ſame views too, viz. to ſatisfy the Galatians, that he had not the goſpel he preached from men, but by direct revelation; that he had been ſteady and uniform in the profeſſion of every point of it; and particularly in that which the new teachers had brought into diſpute; and was ſupported in it by Peter himſelf, whoſe authority they pretended, and all the reſt of the apoſtles and elders of the church of Jeruſalem, ſolemnly convened on this very queſtion.

I ſaid, ſolemnly convened, becauſe ſo they were, by the account the Apoſtle gives of them. But eſpecially that it ſeems to be the very ſame journey which Barnabas and he took to Jeruſalem, together with other brethren ſent from the church of Antioch; as we had occaſion to obſerve in the entry on this epiſtle. It is true, there was no mention of Titus by name; but neither have we the names of any other brethren who went along with them. He might well enough have been ſuppoſed to have been one of them, had not he told us here, that he *took* Titus with him; which ſeems to ſay, that it was by his choice that he went. And it would

would ſeem, that he took him on a particular view, and to anſwer the purpoſe which we find him afterwards adduced for. Which, by the way, carries in it ſomething more than a preſumption, that this journey could not be prior to his firſt journey, along with Barnabas, into the Leſſer Aſia. Nor do we find any of the Gentiles, as Titus certainly was, converted to Chriſtianity before that time; except Cornelius and his friends, whom Peter admitted, and by doing ſo opened the kingdom of heaven among the Gentiles. But the proſecution of that great deſign was left to Paul, as their apoſtle.

What he adds here, verſ. 2. of his going up *by revelation*, has been made an argument to prove, that it muſt have been ſome other journey that he ſpeaks of in this place; as we are expreſsly told, Acts xv. that he and Barnabas were ſent upon this queſtion. But it concludes nothing, ſince there can be no inconſiſtency between the two. Beſides, neither does the Apoſtle ſay, whether the revelation was made to himſelf perſonally, or to the church of Antioch. It will readily be allowed to have been a very proper meaſure, which

common prudence might have directed them to. But it was not the cuſtom of thoſe times, to enter upon any meaſure of moment, without aſking and receiving the direction of the Spirit; which anſwered the ſame purpoſe with that inquiring of the Lord which we find ſo often mentioned in the Old Teſtament. It ſeems, nevertheleſs, that the Apoſtle meant to ſay, that the revelation he ſpeaks of was made to himſelf; and that he was thereby directed by his maſter, to go and ſupport what he had ſaid in his contention with the Judaizing teachers at Antioch, and aſſert the freedom of the Chriſtian churches from that yoke of bondage which neither the Jews, then in being, nor their fathers, were able to bear.

But after all, it is a matter of mere chronological nicety, as it concerns us very little, when we are ſure of the facts, to know the preciſe time when they happened. What in a ſpecial manner belongs to us, is, to conſider the facts which happened on this occaſion, and how they anſwer the Apoſtle's preſent purpoſe. We ſhall have occaſion afterwards to ſee, that the buſineſs of circumciſion, and what was neceſſarily

neceſſarily connected with it, was no ſuch circumſtantial affair as ſuperficial obſervers might imagine it; and that it was not for nothing that great Apoſtle was ſo wary on this point.

Before we can go any further, it will be proper to obſerve, that there were two diſtinct queſtions in agitation at that time: Whether the Chriſtian natural Jews were ſtill bound to obſerve the ritual part of the law given by Moſes? and, Whether the Gentile converts were likewiſe bound to be circumciſed, and obſerve the ſame rules and manner of worſhip? For as to the moral part of that law, and the duties injoined by it, there never was any diſpute. The whole of the Moſaic law, as it was given to that nation, when they were ſeparated from all the other people of the earth, ſtood, as appears by the preface to it, upon their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and their being put in poſſeſſion of the land of Canaan, by the free gift and immediate hand of Jehovah, their God; and obedience to it was the condition on which they poſſeſſed that land. This was ſo peculiar to them, that no other nation or people had, or could have, any concern in it.

The

The natural Jews were indulged in their zeal for this law, probably as long as they continued to poſſeſs the land; and accordingly great care was taken to avoid offending them, as appears by the deciſion of the grand diſpute, Acts xv. in what is commonly called the *council at Jeruſalem*; and eſpecially by Paul's circumciſing Timothy. But he and his fellow-apoſtles being well appriſed, that all the ritual part of that law was typical and figurative, a ſenſible repreſentation of ſpiritual and heavenly things, as they are ſet in a clear light in the goſpel of Chriſt, oppoſed with all their might the conſtruction the carnal Jews made of it, by putting eternal life upon the obſervance of it, directly contrary to the grace of the goſpel, and the ſpiritual worſhip under the miniſtry of the Great High Prieſt over the houſe of God. In this view, the outward circumciſion became the conciſion, Phil. iii. 2. and the true circumciſion was that of the heart.

But the other ſet of duties, ſuch as men owe to God and to one another, injoined likewiſe by the law of Moſes, are of another nature, and ſtand upon a more durable

rable and unchangeable foundation. They are founded originally in the very law of creation; and when ſin entered, and mankind were reduced by it to the moſt deſperate condition, a ſet of new duties were founded, and the old greatly ſtrengthened, by the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, held forth to a periſhing world in the promiſed ſeed of the woman.

From this we may be able diſtinctly to perceive the meaning of the word *law*, as the Apoſtle uſes it in this, and indeed in all his other epiſtles. What he had immediately and directly to do with, was the ritual part, commonly called *the ceremonial law*, in which the Gentile Chriſtians had no concern. But as this ſtood ſo cloſely connected with the moral part, and the whole was abuſed beyond its plain intention, (which never was, to give right to eternal life by obedience to it, and doing as it was there written), the apoſtles found themſelves obliged to oppoſe the whole, when taken in this falſe and wrong conſtruction, and on the ſame grounds to ſet aſide every law which men might frame to themſelves for anſwering the ſame purpoſes, of recommending them to God,

God, and giving a title to eternal life. I call this ſort of laws the imaginations of men: for as God never gave any law to his creatures, but what was founded in previous grace, and what he had freely given them, and done for them; ſo all the laws he ever gave to mankind from the time that ſin entered, injoining what they call moral duties, were cloſely united with the memorials and exhibitions of grace, either in the figurative and typical Old-Teſtament ſacrifices, or in the real New-Teſtament ſacrifice, and the ſervices depending on them. To put aſunder what God has thus inſeparably joined, is evidently to ſet aſide the law of God, and to make a new one to ourſelves.

By this we may be enabled to form a diſtinct view of that goſpel which Paul preached among the Gentiles, and which, he ſays, *he communicated to thoſe of Jeruſalem* at that meeting. And we will find it exactly ſuch as himſelf deſcribes it, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *et ſeqq.* That "Chriſt died for our "ſins, and roſe again, according to the "ſcriptures;" and that through him is proclaimed remiſſion of ſins. So that all who

who believe in him are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes, Acts xiii. 38. 39. In defence of this, he found himſelf obliged, with all his might, to oppoſe every thing that might be ſet up in competition with it; and of courſe to maintain, that the converts from Heatheniſm were ſo far from being bound to ſubject themſelves to the law of Moſes, that even that law could not avail thoſe who were born under it, without having recourſe to the grace of God in Chriſt; which was indeed the very ſpirit of that law, and the end to which it was deſigned to lead them.

There are two circumſtances of this converſation he gives us, viz. That he communicated his goſpel to ſuch as were *of reputation*; and, as our tranſlators render the word he uſes, that he did it *privately* even to them. The perſons to whom, he ſays, he gave this account of himſelf and his miniſtry, are deſcribed by a word which, in its loweſt ſenſe, imports, that they were men of the higheſt credit and reputation in the church; but it imports further, that they were really ſuch as they were reputed to be. This character of

the men contributed greatly to the Apoſtle's views: for when his doctrine was approved, as we find it was, by men of the moſt infallible judgement, and higheſt reputation in the church, no man could charge him with ſingularity, or teaching a goſpel of his own invention. But we ſhould be greatly miſtaken, if we conſtruct the word which our tranſlators render *privately*, as of the ſame import with ſecretly, or in a concealed underhand manner. The Apoſtle's word will not warrant any ſuch meaning. It ſays indeed, that he communicated his goſpel to theſe men of character apart, or ſeparately from the other members of that church: and who could be ſo abſurd as to imagine, that the many thouſand believers who were then at Jeruſalem, were all convened in one place, when the deciſion was given in favour of Barnabas and Paul, on the queſtion ſo warmly diſputed at Antioch? Only, as they found it neceſſary to warn the Gentiles againſt the practice of the two things which were ſo common among them, viz. fornication, and eating things offered to idols; ſo, in tenderneſs to the Jewiſh converts, who were very

very zealous for their law, which they heard daily read in their ſynagogues, they ſaw it neceſſary to injoin abſtinence from things ſtrangled, and from blood.

When the Apoſtle gives it as the reaſon of this piece of his conduct, *leſt by any means he ſhould run, or had run, in vain*, it is certainly not meant to infer, that the ſucceſs of his preaching among the Gentiles depended on the approbation or authority of men. He himſelf explains it, chap. iv. 9. 10. 11. The Galatians, at leaſt ſome conſiderable number of them, had gone a great way toward Judaiſm: "They obſerved days, and months, and "times, and years." So that he was "afraid of them, leſt he had beſtowed upon "them labour in vain." He ſaw the tendency of theſe obſervances ſo well, and how certainly the making theſe things neceſſary would draw them away from Chriſt, and that believing dependence on the grace of God in him which makes one a Chriſtian, that, ſhould this doctrine prevail, all his labour and pains would be loſt; and thoſe who believed in Chriſt, would be reduced to the ſame caſe with the unbelieving Jews, to ſeek for

their juſtification by the works of the law; and the concluſion is certain, that they who ſeek to be juſtified by law, any law whatſoever, are fallen from grace. No wonder, then, that he exerted himſelf with the greateſt earneſtneſs, and ſpared no pains, to ward off ſuch a fatal blow.

There was one great point gained in favour of the Apoſtle, by bringing Titus along with him, and it was a deciſive one. Titus was well known to have been a Greek, that is, of Heathen extraction: and therefore, had that venerable aſſembly been, as the falſe teachers pretended the apoſtles were, of their opinion, they muſt have ordered him to be circumciſed. But they did not, as we read, verſ. 3.; for he was not laid under any ſuch neceſſity. And ſurely circumciſion could not be more neceſſary for any other Gentile convert. And thus, it evidently appeared, that whatever theſe ſupporters of Judaiſm gave out, they had no ſuch command from the apoſtles; and were, by this indiſputable evidence, convicted of the moſt notoriouſly baſe prevarication, which moſt deſervedly ſhould have ruined their credit, ſo as no

regard

regard could be had to any aſſertion of theirs.

There is ſome doubt how the Apoſtle brings in what he ſays concerning *falſe brethren* in the 4th verſe. Our tranſlators connect it with what he had been ſaying about Titus, that this was the deſign of his not being circumciſed, to diſcountenance and diſcourage them. The thing might be true; and very probably this was his deſign in bringing him with him to that meeting. But one who reads the Apoſtle's words, and conſiders attentively the genius of the language in which he wrote, will hardly avoid thinking, that, had this been his intention, he would have prefixed this clauſe to the former verſe. As the words ſtand introduced with the diſcretive particle ἀλλ', which our tranſlators either omit, or render by *and*, without any parallel in either ſacred or profane writings, it would rather ſeem, that he was bringing in a different ſubject, and ſomething which ſhould anſwer the *neither* in the foregoing verſe. And his words will, without any violence, bear this ſenſe, that neither did he, even for the ſmalleſt ſpace of time, give place

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to the falſe brethren who intended, in an irregular and clandeſtine manner, to ſpy out the liberty which they had in Chriſt. Literally, the words might run thus in our language: *But by falſe brethren, who intruded themſelves, &c.* And then he adds, that he ſhowed not the leaſt regard to them.

What kind of men theſe falſe brethren were; whether Jewiſh emiſſaries, who only pretended to be Chriſtians, in order to get into the ſecrets of that party, which they might imagine were ſuch as they did not chuſe to make open profeſſion of; or thoſe bigots to the law of Moſes, mentioned Acts xv. who, though they believed that Jeſus was indeed the Meſſiah, or the Chriſt, yet not being ſufficiently inſtructed in what was included in that character, inſiſted, and taught, that, notwithſtanding all that he had done, or engaged to do, "if one was not circumciſed after "the manner of Moſes, he could not be "ſaved." It is indeed a matter of little moment, which of theſe two the men were who diſputed this point ſo hotly, as the laſt were in reality as much enemies to the croſs of Chriſt as the former, and as effectually

effectually renounced the grace held forth in him. But yet they might be honeſt, and ſincere in their zeal, though it was not according to knowledge.

But none of theſe, as it follows, verſ. 5. had any effect on the firm ſpirit of our Apoſtle. He ſtood his ground, and would not make the leaſt conceſſion. He knew himſelf ſupported by the beſt authority, that of Jeſus himſelf, from whom he had received his inſtructions.

If we compare the account Paul here gives of the iſſue of this meeting, with the account the Evangeliſt Luke gives of that Acts xv. we will find them preciſely the ſame. In both there was much diſputing by the Judaizers, who certainly were not true brethren, on one ſide, and Barnabas and Paul on the other; and we muſt remember, that the laſt was, on all occaſions, the chief ſpeaker, Acts xiv. 12. In both, Paul declared the goſpel preached by him among the Gentiles, and the teſtimony given of God's approbation by the miracles and wonders wrought among them; and in both the iſſue is the ſame, a general approbation of his conduct. But before he comes to that, he inſerts what

what might be a full anſwer to what the ſeducers had advanced againſt him, viz. that he knew nothing of the goſpel, but what he had learned from the other apoſtles, or their miniſters. He had now an opportunity, for the firſt time, to compare their meaſure of knowledge, and underſtanding, in the myſteries of the goſpel, with his own; and found, that the beſt approved among them knew no more than himſelf did: *For in conference*, ſays he, verſ. 6. *they added nothing at all to me.*

As his words ſtand in our tranſlation, he may ſeem to ſpeak diminutively, and even ſlightingly, of theſe great men; which, we may be very ſure, was far from his intention. *Thoſe who ſeemed to be ſomewhat*, twice repeated, may admit of a very bad conſtruction, as if they had not been really what they ſeemed to be. But the word he uſes will admit of no ſuch meaning. It is the ſame which, verſ. 2. is rendered, *thoſe who were of reputation*; and, which we obſerved there, does not import barely the high opinion of men, and the eſteem they held them in, but their real worth and merit. But as in conference they added nothing to him, it was

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the ſame thing to him, whatever their real worth might be, or however worthleſs he himſelf might be. As *God is no reſpecter of perſons*, he may employ whom he pleaſes, and can fit and qualify them for the work he calls them to; and certainly will do it, where-ever he calls any one; and eſpecially when he calls him in ſuch a very miraculous manner as he did Paul.

But there was ſtill ſomething more in the iſſue of that meeting. For ſo far was he from learning any thing from them, that they gave him a moſt honourable teſtimony, and that upon the ſureſt and moſt ſufficient evidence. It was *James, Cephas, and John*, (who, it ſeems, were the only apoſtles then preſent), who gave this teſtimony. I need not obſerve, that Cephas is the ſame perſon with Peter; and by that name he was beſt known among the Hebrews. And here again our tranſlators make Paul ſpeak in the ſame doubtful manner. Of theſe ſure he would never have ſaid in our language, that they *ſeemed* to be pillars; but as he does in his own, that they really were pillars, and approved ones too, as on them, under

their great maſter, the grand building, the Chriſtian church, reſted, Eph. ii. 20. Theſe ſame pillars *gave Paul and Barnabas the right hand of fellowſhip*, verſ. 9. communion and partnerſhip. No body will need to aſk in what, when we find it immediately added, that they ſhould *go to the uncircumciſion, and the other to the circumciſion:* which is not ſo to be underſtood as if they were either limited by their commiſſion from Jeſus, or limited themſelves, ſo as they might not, as occaſions offered, all of them act as apoſtles, either to Jews or Gentiles, as we find Paul did in every place where he preached the goſpel; but that Paul and Barnabas were, by their commiſſion, ſent to the Gentiles. And accordingly Paul deſigns himſelf, *the apoſtle of the Gentiles*, and glories in that office, Rom. xi. 13. All the apoſtles had the ſame powers, and acted on the ſame unlimited commiſſion, to go and preach the goſpel to every creature under heaven, Mark xvi. 15. Matth. xxviii. 19.

This concluſion was not made, either at random, or from any particular bias in favour of the two new apoſtles. For, beſides that they were endued with extraordinary

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meaſures of the Holy Spirit, and in all matters of moment at leaſt acted under his peculiar influence and direction, they had the fulleſt evidence that could be given, of as good a title to the apoſtolical character as Peter himſelf; which no body every attempted to call in queſtion: *He that wrought effectually in Peter to the apoſtleſhip of the circumciſion, wrought*, preciſely in the ſame manner, and with the ſame efficacy, *in Paul to the apoſtleſhip of the Gentiles*, as in verſ. 8.

The Apoſtle does not ſay who it was who wrought in Peter and him; nor was it at all needful. It was, without all queſtion, God who wrought in them both; for all things are of him, 2 Cor. v. 18. And as needleſs to aſk, whether he means the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit. For the Father does nothing about the creature, and eſpecially mankind, but by the Son. By him he made the worlds; by him he upholds all things there; and by him he governs, and will at laſt judge, the world. Neither is there any thing done by the Father and Son, but by the Holy Spirit, who is therefore promiſcuouſly called the Spirit of God and of

Chriſt. Whatever is done by the Son, is done, at the ſame time, by the Father, for he and the Father are one; and whatſoever is done by the Holy Spirit, is, for the ſame reaſon, ſaid to be done by both. Thus we find the aſtoniſhing relation between God and believers, or right Chriſtians, expreſſed indifferently, by God's dwelling in them as his temple, and Chriſt and his Spirit dwelling and abiding in them. God dwells in them in and by Chriſt; and Chriſt abides and lives in them by his Spirit: "For if any man have not "the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his."

This ſame Spirit, and the mighty power of God, working in Peter and Paul, appears, by what he ſays here, to have been the great evidence of their divine commiſſion and ordination to the apoſtolic office; and muſt comprehend all that was neceſſary for fitting them for it, and evidencing their divine commiſſion to thoſe they were ſent to.

To qualify them for the office, they muſt have a thorough knowledge of the buſineſs they were employed in, and courage and prudence for managing it to the beſt advantage. What their buſineſs was,

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we cannot learn more certainly than from Paul himſelf. In general it was, to declare the teſtimony of God, 1 Cor. ii. 1.; and the whole of his counſel, Acts; xx. 27. This, it is eaſy to ſee, is what requires the utmoſt exactneſs. If there be any thing added or omitted, nay and if every part of it be not declared in the ſame connection and order in which he has laid it, it is no longer God's teſtimony, but an invention of our own. More particularly, it is the teſtimony which God hath given concerning his bleſſed Son: and thus it was Chriſt crucified, and his unſearchable riches, that Paul preached among the Gentiles, 1 Cor. i. 21. So this Apoſtle begins, Acts ix. 20.; and ſo he continued his determined purpoſe, to know nothing among thoſe he preached to, but "Chriſt, and him crucified," 1 Cor. ii. 2. This was new doctrine to the world in general, a ſtumbling-block to the Jews, and fooliſhneſs to the learned Greeks. All the learning, wiſdom, and power, then in the world, was againſt it; and employed with the greateſt addreſs. How then could Paul, a ſtranger and bigotted enemy to Chriſt, in two or three days, and without any ordinary means,

means, acquire ſuch a perfect knowledge of him, as to preach him with great ſucceſs, but by the direct inſtruction of his maſter, and that Spirit which "ſearches "all things, even the deep things of God," and leads into all truth? And how could he bear up againſt all oppoſition, ſo as to bear the utmoſt contempt and reproach, nay and the ſevereſt perſecution on this account, but by Chriſt ſtrengthening and ſupporting him by his almighty power? The very rulers of the Jews, obſtinately bigotted as they were in their unbelief, ſeeing the boldneſs of Peter and John, whom they knew to have been unlearned and ignorant men, eaſily perceived that they had been with Jeſus, John iv. 13.

But there are ſtill two evidences more, which Paul had of his apoſtolic authority, in common with the reſt of the apoſtles, viz. the mighty works which were given him to do, and the great ſucceſs of his miniſtry. Much fruitleſs diſputing has been about the nature and uſe of miracles. I enter not into the diſpute. But Nicodemus's concluſion will certainly be allowed a good one, that our Lord was "a teacher ſent of God;" for this reaſon, that

that "no man could do ſuch works, unleſs "God was with him," John iii. Our Lord himſelf reaſons in the ſame manner, John x. 38. & xv. 24.; and in almoſt all his diſcourſes, That if he had not done among them ſuch works as no other man did, they would not have been ſo much to blame for not acknowledging his divine commiſſion; but as he had, in almoſt numberleſs inſtances, they had no cloak for their unbelief: and theſe we find the Apoſtle adducing as the teſtimony of God given to the apoſtles, Heb. ii. 4. "God "alſo bearing them witneſs, both with "ſigns and wonders, and with divers mi-"racles, and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt."

But the finiſhing part of the evidence, and which may very juſtly be accounted the greateſt miracle of all, was the wonderful ſucceſs of his miniſtry, the proper evidence of God's working very powerfully in him; that he was not afraid to ſay, "that he was not behind the very "chiefeſt apoſtles;" eſpecially when the rules he laid down to himſelf, and punctually followed, are duly conſidered: for he not only renounced all the arts of craft and cunning, too commonly practiſed by ſuch

ſuch as want to make a party, but even the allowable addreſs of human wiſdom, and the powers of eloquence. And he gives this reaſon for it, that the faith of his hearers ſhould not ſtand in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God; and, in the room of all, ſubſtitutes the demonſtration of the Spirit and of power, 1 Cor. ii. 3. 4. 5.

There have been, in all the ages of Chriſtianity, a number of men, who, reckoning themſelves greatly wiſer than their neighbours, made it their buſineſs, inſtead of declaring the teſtimony of God, to reduce the goſpel of Chriſt to a merely rational ſyſtem, exactly ſuited to the natural ſtate of the human powers, the meaſure of a ſort of moral government; and they ſuppoſe, that when that is once fairly revealed, and notified, the great Creator and gracious Redeemer have no more to do with them, until they come to ſtand before his judgement-ſeat, to be rewarded or puniſhed, according as their behaviour has been good or bad, wiſe or fooliſh: and accordingly, much learned labour and critical ſkill have been employed to remove the grace of God, which Paul ſo much

much inſiſted on, and the influence of his Spirit, and power, out of their way; and to perſuade the world, that the demonſtration of the Spirit, and the power of God, on which Paul would have the faith of Chriſtians to ſtand, was no more but the rational evidence ariſing from the miracles which the apoſtles and firſt preachers wrought by the gift of the Spirit, and the power of God. But ſurely Paul meant ſomething more, when he ſaid, "Paul "might plant, and Apollos water; but "that it was God who gave the increaſe," 1 Cor. iii. 6.; and when he talks ſo poſitively of God's quickening thoſe who were dead in ſin; nay, makes faith itſelf, or mens believing the teſtimony of God, his own gift. Our Lord too certainly meant more, when he ſaid, that "without him" even his choſen diſciples "could do no-"thing;" and Paul, when he ſaid, "he "could do all things through Chriſt "ſtrengthening him." Theſe, with many other ſuch expreſſions, muſt certainly have had ſome other meaning, than that God and Chriſt, after revealing this ſame inſtrument of moral government, did no-

thing more, but left every man to do for himſelf as he beſt could.

When we add to this, the promiſe of the Spirit, ſo often repeated, not only on ſome choſen apoſtles and evangeliſts, but upon all fleſh, evèn ſervants and hand-maids, *i. e.* male and female ſlaves; and, in general, the aſſurance our Lord gives, that his heavenly Father will give this ſame Spirit to all that aſk him, be who they will, or what they will, without excepting any, Luke xi. 13.; and the purpoſes for which he is given, John xiv. & xvi. to ſupply Chriſt's bodily abſence with advantage, "to lead into all truth," and "bring all things to their remembrance;" and, in a word, to take of Chriſt's things, (and all that the Father hath is his), and ſhew them to them: he who duly conſiders theſe, and ſuch other accounts we have in the divine record, will not heſitate to think, that this ſame demonſtration of the Spirit and power of God, leads to that life and power which is the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of the word of God, Jer. xxiii. 28. 29.; and that this was the mighty power which wrought effectually in the apoſtles.

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We need not ſtand on what the Apoſtle ſays Peter, James, and John, ſingly inſiſted upon, verſ. 10. viz. That he and his aſſociates *ſhould be mindful of the poor*, (an admonition which he did not need), unleſs it be to obſerve how much this duty is inſiſted on, commanded, and commended, in the divine record, and how little minded in common practice. It is one of thoſe things which men have learned to call *imperfect rights*, becauſe there are no human laws to inforce it; and therefore is no further minded than thoſe laws oblige them to contribute their proportion. But in truth the poor have as good a right to relief as the great proprietor of all things can give them.

It would likewiſe have been needleſs to obſerve the order in which the Apoſtle here ranks theſe *pillars* of the primitive church, were it not for the inſolent pretenſions of the men who, without any ſhadow of reaſon, except what themſelves have forged, pretend to be the ſucceſſors of Peter. The Apoſtle here ranks James before him; and James poſſeſſed the place of preſident in what themſelves call a general council. Peter himſelf was ſo far from uſurping the title of Univerſal

Biſhop, that we find him confining his charge to the circumciſion, and reſigning all the reſt of the world to Paul. But the latter has been ſo happy as never to have had any ſo far injurious to his true character, as to profeſs themſelves his ſucceſſors upon any ſuch authority; though he was in no reſpect inferior to the other. Peter indeed made uſe of the keys of the kingdom given him by his maſter, to open the gate to the Gentiles; but Paul had the honour of gathering them in.

CHAP. ii. 11. —— 21.

11. *But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed.* 12. *For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion.* 13. *And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that Barnabas alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation.* 14. *But when I ſaw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the goſpel, I ſaid unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* 15. *We who are Jews by nature, and not ſinners of the Gentiles,* 16. *knowing that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, even we have believed in Jeſus Chriſt;*

Chriſt; that we might be juſtified by the faith of Chriſt, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law ſhall no fleſh be juſtified. 17. *But if while we ſeek to be juſtified by Chriſt, we ourſelves alſo are found ſinners, is therefore Chriſt the miniſter of ſin? God forbid.* 18. *For if I build again the things which I deſtroyed, I make myſelf a tranſgreſſor.* 19. *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.* 20. *I am crucified with Chriſt: Nevertheleſs I live; yet not I, but Chriſt liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the fleſh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* 21. *I do not fruſtrate the grace of God: for if righteouſneſs come by the law, then Chriſt is dead in vain.*

WE have, in this part of the epiſtle, a very remarkable piece of hiſtory, which, had it turned on the other ſide, would have been trumpeted about as a deciſive proof of Peter's abſolute ſovereignty, not only over the lay part, and inferior clergy, as they call them, but over the apoſtles themſelves. As it ſtands, it preſents us with a ſtriking evidence of Peter's weakneſs, and Paul's great integrity, courage, and reſolution, on this particular occaſion. He did not, as I am afraid moſt would have done, out of pretended modeſty, and regard to the character of ſo great an apoſtle, huſh over the thing in ſilence;

lence; nor did he (as many do) ſay nothing in the party's preſence, but rate him ſoundly when out of his hearing: No; he *withſtood the great apoſtle to his face*, and in ſuch a manner too, as could hardly miſs to carry conviction to him, that he was really *to be blamed*.

The time when this happened cannot be certainly known, nor is it of any moment, when the fact is certain. Paul and Barnabas were both at Antioch before they went up to and after they returned from the meeting at Jeruſalem. Before the meeting, the diſputes about the neceſſity of circumciſion were very hot. Had Peter come at that time, very probably the journey might have been prevented; at leaſt it muſt have been taken notice of then. But he appears there as much a ſtranger to the queſtion as any of the reſt. It is moſt probable, therefore, that it happened during the time that Paul continued at Antioch, before he ſet out on his ſecond journey, when Barnabas and he parted from one another.

But however that may be, Peter converſed with the Gentile Chriſtians there preciſely on the ſame terms as if they had been

been natural born Jews. But when ſome came from Jeruſalem, where all the Chriſtian converts were ſtill, and many years after continued to be, very zealous for the law of Moſes, Peter, upon the very plauſible motive of avoiding the offence he was jealous theſe ſtrangers might take at that ſort of freedom, withdrew himſelf, and would no more eat with the Gentiles. His example, as bad ones commonly do, had very bad effects. The Jews, and even Barnabas himſelf, ſeparated themſelves along with him; though they well knew there was no manner of ground for ſo doing, but humouring a ſet of obſtinately miſtaken people.

The leaſt evil that was in this was, that *they walked not uprightly*, and with that plain ſincerity the goſpel of Chriſt requires. They diſſembled, or, in the true ſenſe of the Apoſtle's word, they played the hypocrite, affecting to appear what really they were not. But this, which in them was only affected on that occaſion, brought in yet a greater evil: it led theſe miſtaken zealots to think, that Peter and Barnabas, with the reſt, were really of the ſame mind with themſelves; which muſt

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of courſe have hardened and confirmed them in their error, and thus encouraged a party, which occaſioned great confuſions in the churches, as it was doing in the churches of Galatia when this epiſtle was written.

In this light it is evident the Apoſtle conſidered that part of Peter's conduct. It was not barely eating or not eating, but the principles from which theſe different practices proceeded, that he had in view, as appears from what he ſaid on that occaſion. The Jewiſh converts, at bottom, could ill bear that the nations ſhould be brought upon a level with them. They could not get it refuſed, "that God had granted to "the Gentiles repentance unto life." But then they held, that, in order to reap any benefit from it, they muſt receive the law of Moſes. The noble ſtand Paul made on this occaſion againſt this pernicious principle, was enough to put the whiſpers the Galatians had been deluded with out of countenance: that, ſo far from giving any encouragement to it, either by his preaching or practice, he had, from the commencement of his apoſtleſhip, ſteadily and reſolutely defended the liberty of the Gentile

Gentile churches; and that, when he had, as on this occaſion he certainly had, the ſtrongeſt temptations to have been ſilent on that head.

But what he ſaid to Peter, the terms in which he rebuked him, and the reaſons with which he ſupports his rebuke, ſets this yet in a ſtronger light; and was, at the ſame time, moſt proper to recover thoſe of the Galatians who were drawn into the ſnare, and to ſupport and ſtrengthen the hands of thoſe who ſtood. He lays the foundation of it in a ſuppoſition, which he well knew Peter neither would nor could deny, viz. *'that he lived as the Gentiles do*, though he was a natural Jew, and had all the advantages the law could give; ſo that nothing could be more abſurd, than for him to put the Gentiles under a neceſſity of living as the Jews do.

No body will imagine that he meant to ſay, that Peter lived in the ſame manner the Gentiles did in their natural ſtate, while they were without Chriſt, ſtrangers to the covenants of promiſe, without hope, and without God in the world, as himſelf deſcribes their unhappy ſtate, Eph. ii. 3. They were the Chriſtian Gentiles, ſuch

of them as had believed in Chriſt, he means; ſtrangers indeed to the Jewiſh law, and expecting no manner of advantage by it; but far from being in a hopeleſs condition, as they were before they believed in Chriſt, in whom all the promiſes are yea, and in him amen. In him they had all, and greatly more than the moſt perfect obſervers of Moſes's law had to expect by their moſt punctual obedience.

Thus we find himſelf explaining his meaning, verſ. 18.; where it appears, that he did Peter no injury when he ſaid, he lived as the Gentiles did; and ſaid no more than himſelf was very ready to acknowledge, and had acknowledged in the moſt open and avowed manner. The great point, which all mankind, Jews and Gentiles, are moſt deeply concerned in, was then, and ever will be, How a ſinner can be ſecured in the pardon of ſin, and acquire ſuch a right to eternal life, as that he may appear with confidence before the great Sovereign Judge. The Jews, in the unhappy ſtate the bulk of that nation was in, from the time they had

had loſt the right knowledge of the law given to their fathers by Moſes, and the promiſe made to their father Abraham, had nothing left them but the bare letter; where there was no promiſe of any thing but the bare pardon of ſin; no ſecurity againſt relapſes, nor any aſſurance of any happineſs beyond the grave; which betrayed the ſect of the Sadducees, the moſt learned among them in the letter of the law, into that Atheiſtical notion, that death and the grave made a final end of the man. For that was the uniform tenor of their law, leaving no room nor allowance for repentance, amendment, or any of thoſe other ſalvos men have invented, to ſooth themſelves into fooliſh and groundleſs hopes of, they know not what: "For it is written, Curſed is every one "who continueth not in all things writ-"ten in the book of the law to do them." And ſuch is the nature of that curſe, that it never leaves the unhappy ſubject on which it once reſts, until it be abſolutely deſtroyed. This appears abundantly from what we have recorded in the Old-Teſtament hiſtory: and yet more from this, that this ſame curſe of the law, is the con-

ſtitution and righteous ſentence of the great ſovereign of heaven and earth, and which can no more fail of its effect than the God of truth can lie. He can raiſe the dead ſinner, ſlain by the curſe of his law; but he has precluded himſelf from ſaving him from death. As then it is a certain, and univerſally acknowledged truth, that all have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God, it would have been a plain truth, though it had never been taken notice of before Paul ſaid it, "That "by the deeds of the law no fleſh living "can be juſtified: but indeed the Pſalmiſt had ſaid it very long before him, Pſal. cxliii. 2. "Enter not into judgement "with thy ſervant; for in thy ſight no "fleſh living can be juſtified."

There is hardly a word in the Bible, (as indeed there is none of greater importance to mankind), which has occaſioned more jangling and diſpute than the word *juſtify*; and yet hardly can any thing be plainer than the thing meant by it. Were the text juſt now quoted from the Pſalmiſt duly conſidered, I am pretty ſure it would determine the whole affair. It is an appeal from a judgement-ſeat to a throne

throne of grace; from a court of juſtice, where ſtrict law is the rule, to a court of grace, where law has no place, but free ſovereign grace and merciful kindneſs is the only meaſure: thither the man who ſtands condemned in law, muſt have his recourſe, or periſh. The mercy and goodneſs of the divine nature may give ſome faint glimmerings of hope; but nothing can give any tolerable confidence, but an expreſs declaration of the ſovereign, and an expreſs grant of pardon and eternal life, upon the convicted criminal's appeal to a throne of grace. Juſtifying implies more than bare pardon. It ſuppoſes a judicial procedure; according to which none can be juſtified, but ſuch as have a right to live, and ſome righteouſneſs to plead upon. "Had there been a law given that "could have given life," the Apoſtle ſays, "righteouſneſs might have been "had by a perfect conformity to that "law." But he takes it for granted, that there was no ſuch law; for the law of God, in whatever view we take it, condemns and curſes the ſinner: but the greateſt ſinner ever was may acquire a perfect right, by the free pardon and grant of life.

Such

Such a gift and grant of pardon, and eternal life, we have held forth in the goſpel of Chriſt, proclaimed to the Gentile world in the teſtimony God has given concerning his Son, whom he has ſent to be the Saviour of the world; where there is nothing, nor in this ſtate of things can there be any thing neceſſary, but to believe the promiſe and grant as it ſtands in Jeſus Chriſt, and to truſt in the faithfulneſs of the great ſurety-prieſt, who ſtands obliged, by his office, to convey the bleſſing, by giving eternal life to all that come to him. By the faith or belief of this teſtimony which God has given concerning his Son, and which the Apoſtle calls the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, the Gentiles had as full and as perfect a right to the promiſed life, as God could give: and when the Jews had made all that could be made of their law, they muſt either periſh, or have recourſe to the very ſame grant of grace by which the Gentiles had their right to pardon and eternal life.

Thus we ſee how the Jews and how the Gentiles lived; and how the former, with all the diſtinguiſhing privileges they boaſted of, while they deſpiſed the poor uncircumciſed

uncircumciſed Gentiles, were yet in never a whit better circumſtances than they; for they were ſtill ſinners, and more directly bound under the curſe, until they took the ſame courſe the Gentiles did, for relief in Chriſt Jeſus. How abſurd, then, and fooliſh, muſt it have been, to attempt bringing the Gentiles into that ſituation under the law, which they found themſelves obliged to forſake, as unprofitable, and unable to perform what they thoughtleſsly expected from it.

What the Apoſtle adds in verſ. 17. has been ſomewhat differently underſtood. The words ſound very like the objection againſt the doctrine of grace, Rom. vi. 1. and may, in that ſenſe, be conſiſtent enough with the Apoſtle's views, and the context. It has been, in all ages, the manner of thoſe who oppoſe the doctrine of grace, and free juſtification, as the Apoſtle was ſtating it, to aſſume the air of great concern for holineſs of life, and practical godlineſs, which, they think, cannot be ſufficiently ſecured, but on the plan of what they call moral government, and the ſanction of rewards and puniſhments. The Apoſtle ſhows at large, Rom. vi. & vii.

vii. that the higheſt ſovereignty of grace is ſo far from encouraging any to continue in ſin, that it makes it impoſſible they ſhould: and he ſays here, that would be to make *Chriſt the miniſter of ſin*; which he rejects, as every one who knows him will, with abhorrence, and the utmoſt deteſtation.

As the Apoſtle had a fair and full view of the whole ſyſtem of grace, as it ſtands in Chriſt Jeſus, continually before him, it cannot be doubted, that he had this well-known calumny under his eye; and forms his diſcourſe with ſuch perfect caution, as to guard the truth of the goſpel at all points, ſo as one needs no more but a fair view of it, to anſwer all exceptions that can be made againſt any part of it. Yet when one conſiders how the words before us ſtand connected, it would ſeem he had a more particular intention. He had been repreſenting the abſurdity of that enormous zeal the Judaizers were ſhewing for the law of Moſes; that after all they did, or could do, they continued ſtill to be ſinners; and were ſo far from being juſtified by the law, that they were bound by it under the curſe. From this unhappy ſtate he

he had ſhown there was no relief, but by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, receiving the free gift in him. But, might the Judaizers ſay, and it is likely they did ſay it, what if thoſe who have believed in Chriſt, and *are juſtified by faith, are ſtill found ſinners?* And, no doubt, they thought, that neglecting, or not obſerving the law of Moſes in all points, which they fooliſhly imagined was to continue for ever, was certainly the greateſt ſin that could be committed. He anſwers ſhortly and ſtrongly, as his manner was in ſuch caſes, by putting a queſtion which determines the caſe at once, *Is Chriſt the miniſter of ſin?* as it is plain he would be, if believing in him either led them into any ſin, or gave the leaſt handle to continue in it. He rejects the motion with abhorrence, *God forbid*; and all that know any thing of Chriſt, will join him cordially.

It is of little moment to us, whether theſe words are a continuation of what he ſaid to Peter in preſence of the church at Antioch, or addreſſed to the Galatians, on occaſion of that warm and convincing ſpeech. But that they were ſaid with a peculiar eye to the preſent queſtion about

the law, ſeems pretty evident from the reaſon he gives in the following verſes: for ſo we ſee he introduces what he there ſays of his being *dead to the law*. It cannot be doubted, that what he ſays, verſ. 18. he had *deſtroyed*, was impoſing the Moſaic or Jewiſh law on the Gentile Chriſtians. And thus his reaſoning will iſſue in this, That Chriſt was ſo far from being the miniſter of ſin, or leaving his diſciples ſinners, that if he, or any one, ſhould attempt to rear up that now ruinous and uſeleſs building, as the Judaizing teachers were attempting to do, they offered the greateſt indignity to Chriſt which any creature can offer; and thus *make themſelves tranſgreſſors*, indeed of the moſt inſolent and daring kind: for they ſay, that God's gift of grace can anſwer no purpoſe, and that Chriſt cannot ſave or juſtify a ſinner, unleſs that law which he came to ſet aſide, by fulfilling all the purpoſes of it, be brought in again to finiſh the work which, he tells his heavenly Father, he had himſelf finiſhed, John xvii. 4.

The Apoſtle aſſures the Galatians, that he never had, nor would have, any hand in ſuch a mad project, nor would any man

man elſe, who knows what he is doing. Nay, further, he ſays plainly enough, that he could not. And what he ſays of himſelf, holds true with all right Chriſtains: for as he was, ſo are they, *dead to the law*; and death, we know, puts an end to all connections and obligations. Thoſe who read this, and the other epiſtles of this apoſtle where the ſame ſubject is treated, can have no doubt, but that it is the Judaical law, as given by Moſes, he here ſpeaks of. But here the patrons of moral government find themſelves at a loſs, as a great part, and, one may ſay, the principal and fundamental part of it, conſiſts of ſuch precepts as are ſtrictly moral; or, what I ſuppoſe they mean by that term, binding all mankind at all times, and in all places; the ſame which is very properly called the law of creation, and founded in that relation; or, in plain terms, their being obliged to their creator for their being, and all the enjoyments of life. If the Chriſtian is dead to theſe commands, their whole fabrick falls at once. They therefore attempt to ſplit the law into the ritual or ceremonial, and the moral; which accordingly they call

the ceremonial and moral laws; and earneſtly plead, that it is only the firſt which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of, and which he ſays he is *dead to*. And thoſe on the other ſide have given them great advantage, by taking up the ſame diſtinction and arbitrary terms, and maintaining, that what they call the moral part of Moſes's law, continues binding on all mankind, as it was given to the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs of Sinai.

But thoſe who conſider the Jewiſh law attentively, and the very peculiar circumſtances which preceded the giving of that law, with the ſtate of that nation after it, and compare it with the ſtate of thoſe who lived before that time, and of the other nations who were contemporary, and eſpecially ſince the coming of Chriſt, find themſelves obliged to conclude, that, excepting that ſingle nation, and thoſe who were incorporated with them, no other whatever had any concern in that law, in whole or in part, as it was given at Sinai. Yet were they not without law. They were all under the law of creation from the time they had their being. They were, moreover, from the publication of the firſt promiſe,

promiſe, under what the Apoſtle calls *the law of faith*, the ſame that Chriſtians are under in all reſpects, except the circumſtantial difference between faith in Chriſt to come, and in Chriſt already come. But neither of theſe were inforced with that terrible ſanction, "Curſed is every one "that continueth not in all things written "in the law to do them," as the Sinaic law was: ſo that, as the Apoſtle ſays, thoſe who lived before that time could not ſin after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion, who had ſuch a law given him. Nor did there need any ſuch: for that one tranſgreſſion bound all mankind under death by the righteous ſentence of the great ſovereign judge, which admits of no repeal, nor of any relief, but by his grant of grace, who raiſes the dead, and can give a new and perfect life to whom he pleaſes. But, in the nature of the thing, it is plain, none can be thus raiſed and quickened, until they be dead firſt.

The Apoſtle, in ſome of his other epiſtles, deſcribes that death from which believers in Chriſt are quickened, and raiſed up, as conſiſting *in treſpaſſes and ſins*, Eph. ii. 1. with ſome other ſuch expreſſions.

ſions. Whence occaſion has been taken to conclude, that all that is ſaid about the old man being crucified with Chriſt, crucifying the fleſh, with the luſts and affections of it, are no more but bold metaphors and figures of ſpeech, which they tell us the eaſtern people were very fond of; and mean no more but the ſinner's forſaking his evil courſes, reforming his life, and thus becoming a new man. To make their plan conſiſtent, they muſt make God's grant of pardon and eternal life, which Chriſt is ſaid to convey to them by his quickening Spirit, to be likewiſe figurative and metaphorical; and to mean no more, but lengthening out this periſhing life the children of Adam are in ſome ſort poſſeſſed of, until, by a gradual progreſs in virtue, they raiſe themſelves to the higheſt perfection and dignity the human nature is capable of. And ſome have carried it very far this way; but how conſiſtently with the accounts God himſelf, by his bleſſed Son and his apoſtles, hath given us of theſe things, thoſe who will give themſelves the trouble of reading them, will eaſily judge. It will not ſurely be refuſed, that ſuch as was the life which

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our firſt father loſt, ſuch, at leaſt, believers in Chriſt are raiſed up to; that there is a ſpiritual and eternal world, of which this groſs periſhing one is but an imperfect image; that, of courſe, there muſt be a ſort of life, and way of living, ſuitable to that world, as the life we have from Adam fits us for living in this world; and that God himſelf is the very ſubſtance of that world, on whom all the happy inhabitants ſubſiſt.

If theſe things be ſo, (and they muſt be ſo as certainly as that there is a God), whenever any creature, made for living in this manner, comes to be ſeparated and cut off from God, and of courſe ſhut out from all communication with the ſpiritual world, however alive to this preſent world, it muſt be really, and without any metaphor, dead, being deprived of that kind of life which can only make it capable of living as ſpirits do, and muſt do. And as we can be ſurer of nothing, than that ſin thus makes a ſeparation between the creator and the creature, it is truly, and without any figure, the death of the human ſpirit; and ſo much worſe than what we call natural death, the death of the body,

body, as it is infinitely worſe to have our connection with the ſpiritual world, that is, with God, by whom only ſpirits can live, diſſolved, than to have all our connections with the preſent world deſtroyed; which is all that we can mean by natural death, where not one atom of the body is deſtroyed, tho' the animal fabrick be diſſolved; nor can ſuch a ſpirit be reunited, or raiſed up to ſuch an union with the great Father of ſpirits as ſhall communicate to them the ſpirit of life, which no mortal either can expect, or have the remoteſt hope of, but by what we have ſo often had occaſion to glance at, viz. the gift of grace in Chriſt Jeſus. "They who are joined to him are "one ſpirit;" and that carries in it one life, and one way of living with him; which muſt be carefully obſerved, becauſe it is on this ground that we are ſo often told of being quickened together with Chriſt, and raiſed from the dead, in the virtue of his obedience unto the death, his great ſacrifice and powerful interceſſion, to partake in his ſpirit and life. Hence the Chriſtian's life is ſaid to be "hid with God in him;" and, what carries it as far as words can be found to expreſs it, Chriſt is ſaid to be "their

"life,"

"life," and "to live in them," as we ſhall ſee by and by.

It may poſſibly be ſaid, What is all this to the preſent purpoſe, where the Apoſtle ſays, that *through the law he was dead to the law?* Let the Apoſtle himſelf anſwer it. Let us firſt obſerve how the man is brought under death, and held under it. He had ſaid it was by *the law*; and he thus deſcribes the progreſs of it, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "the ſting of death;" that by which it kills the man, "is ſin." And if we want to know how ſin comes by this power, he tells us it is by the law: "The ſtrength "of ſin is the law." It was that which armed it with its killing power; it drives and rivets the ſting ſo, that it comes to be the very death of the ſinner, as it puts an end to life in all the views we can take of it. And thence it follows of courſe, that ſo long as the ſinner continues under the law, he muſt ſtand bound under death. And by what we have already obſerved, there is only one way in which a ſinner can poſſibly eſcape, viz. that which the Apoſtle here mentions, by becoming dead to the law, as he ſays he was through the law itſelf.

Thoſe who maintain, that nothing more than the ritual or ceremonial part of the law of Moſes was abrogated, or rather fulfilled, by Chriſt, while the moral continues in full force, are forced to ſay, that the deliverance of the believer from this law, ariſes from its very nature, being altogether figurative and typical, a ſhadow or faint delineation of the good things that were to come; and when Chriſt, the ſubſtance of them all, came, the law, in this view, expired of courſe. But had this been the Apoſtle's intention, as no man ever knew better how to expreſs himſelf properly, he muſt have ſaid, The law was dead to him, and not he to the law. But neither could that have anſwered his views, nor what he had been ſaying but juſt before, that the law bound all who were under it, at the ſame time under the curſe; which cannot be removed until it has brought the ſinner to death, and put a full end to all that life we derive from Adam. It had done one principal part of this its office, when mankind were, in the virtue of the original curſe, brought under the power of the ſpiritual death. And in this ſituation they are taken up by the

the merciful Saviour, and quickened by the conveyance of the Spirit of life; by the ſame power which firſt breathed or inſpired the breath or ſpirit of life into the firſt man. But the animal or merely rational life, the only one Adam could convey, is ſtill in being, and muſt be deſtroyed ere one can enter upon the full poſſeſſion of ſpiritual and eternal life; for we are aſſured, that "fleſh and blood can-"not inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and we are only ſaved in hope, waiting for the redemption of the body. It is true, what the Apoſtle ſays, that Chriſt has redeemed us from the curſe of the law; but he does not ſay, he has taken away the curſe from the law, for then we ſhould not have died. But this we ſhall meet with in its proper place. And thus the Apoſtle's ſentiments are clear and conſiſtent: the law had ſlain him, Rom. vii. 11. and thus done its utmoſt againſt him; and had nothing further to ſay to him. Death cancels all obligations.

The whole of this affair we have laid down by this ſame apoſtle, Rom. vii. 1.—4. and which renders it the more proper to be taken notice of, he here takes it up preciſe-

ly in the ſame light. The law, he ſays, and he ſays it as a thing known to all, "The law hath dominion over a man as "long as he lives." And becauſe there was no caſe known in this world of one living after he was dead, he takes a well-known example; whereby it appears fully, that death diſſolves the law's obligation, viz. the caſe of a wife at liberty upon her huſband's death. On which he concludes, that all Chriſtians are become "dead to the "law, by the body of Chriſt;" the very ſame which he ſays here, that *he was crucified with Chriſt, and yet lived*; but lived in a very different manner from what he had done formerly, while the law held him under the dominion of ſin and death, and to a very different end and purpoſe. As it is upon this one great point that the Apoſtle makes the whole of the Chriſtian religion depend, it muſt merit the moſt diligent and ſerious conſideration; and the rather, that it has been either overlooked, or explained amiſs, by many who bear the title of *learned divines*.

We have ſeen how certainly the law brings all who are under it to death; that is, it certainly deſtroys all the life they e-

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ver enjoyed; and one would naturally think, that there ſhould be an end of the man. And ſo it moſt certainly would have been, had not the wiſdom of God found a way of condemning and deſtroying ſin, the ſting of death, and yet ſaving the perſon of the ſinner. This is generally allowed to have been done by the death of Chriſt; and the believer's intereſt in it, the Apoſtle expreſſes, by *being crucified with him*; the ſame thing which, on other occaſions, he ſhows himſelf to have been above all things moſt intent upon, or rather to have been the only thing he minded. Chriſt crucified he preached; and it was in effect the only thing he minded in his preaching, 1 Cor. ii. 2. In his own particular caſe, "he counted all things but "loſs and dung, to know Chriſt, and the "fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made "conform to him in his death," Phil. iii. 8. 9.

I cannot think it needful, I am afraid it is very hurtful, to a Chriſtian, to trouble himſelf with the perplexing diſputes, and intricate ſubtilties, which have been ſo immenſely multiplied on this ſubject. Our buſineſs is, to follow the light our Lord and his apoſtles have given us, as far as it leads

leads us, and to ſtop where that ceaſes; without interpoſing our *hows*, and *whys*, or our own conjectures about what ſhould be proper to anſwer them. The light in which the death of Chriſt conſtantly and uniformly ſtands in the record, is, that of a ſacrifice appointed and accepted of God; and all the expreſſions made uſe of to bring us to the right underſtanding of it, evidently either refer to this, or may be reduced to it. And were the nature, ends, and uſes, of a ſacrifice, rightly underſtood, no Chriſtian in any circumſtances could ever need more.

There is not, I think, any where in the New Teſtament any particular deſcription of a ſacrifice, except what can be gathered from the terms equivalent to it, by which the death of Chriſt is ſet forth; ſuch as, a propitiation for ſin,—putting it away,—a ranſom for ſouls or lives,—a price to purchaſe a peculiar people,—giving himſelf to the death for them, that they might live,—and what the Apoſtle tells us, Heb. v. & vii. of the gifts and offerings of the high prieſt, the inferior ones being only his aſſiſtants and miniſters. Nor indeed needed the New-Teſta-

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ment writers ſay any thing upon a ſubject then ſo well known by the large accounts of every circumſtance of it in the books of Moſes, and at that time in daily practice. Nor need we any more than to apply theſe to our Great High Prieſt, and his ſacrifices; obſerving only the ſpecialties peculiar to the latter, as they are very particularly pointed out by the Apoſtle.

A ſacrifice then was, and ſtill is, the way God in his wiſdom choſe to condemn and to put away ſin, and by which the pardon of ſin was conveyed: "For without ſhedding of blood there is no remiſſion." And thoſe who attend to it, will eaſily perceive how all theſe purpoſes were effectually anſwered. But it muſt be minded, in the firſt place, that no ſacrifices might be offered in any caſe but ſuch as God appointed; nor might any one offer his own ſacrifice, but the high prieſt alone. But all this, however ſolemnly it might be conducted, could have given the ſinner but very faint, or rather no hope, had it not been for the promiſe God had annexed to the appointed ſacrifice offered according to his direction, that the ſin ſhould be forgiven: and therefore, according

cording as his faith or belief of the promiſe roſe up to aſſurance, or ſunk into doubting, ſuch, of courſe, muſt his hope and comfort have been.

All this is ſo eaſily applied to our Great High Prieſt and his ſacrifice, that it will be needleſs to enter into particulars; only we muſt conſider attentively how ſin was condemned and put away by this inſtitution. As there was no room for any hope of pardon in any other way, the perſon who found himſelf guilty, muſt bring his ſacrifice to the prieſt: he muſt confeſs his ſin over the head of his ſacrifice; and that could not be done without acknowledging that he had forfeited his life, and was a dead man according to the rule of ſtrict juſtice, renouncing all pretenſions to live in any other way, or by any other title, than that conveyed by the free promiſe. The prieſt, by his office, was bound to take the ſinner's ſacrifice off his hand, and his ſin along with it, and to put it away by the ſacrifice, ſo as the ſinner had no more to do with it. If there was any error committed in the offering, it lay upon the prieſt, not on him.

By

By this any one may ſee what it is to be *crucified with Chriſt*, and how naturally the conſequences of it, which the Apoſtle lays down in his own caſe, muſt follow upon it. It is evident the ſacrifice, whatever it was, which God had choſen, was ſubſtituted in the room of the ſinner, and ſtood in that very place where he himſelf did before the ſubſtitution. I dare not call it his *law-room*, though many great and good men have; becauſe it is not by deeds of law, whether performed by ourſelves or another, that any fleſh living can be juſtified. The whole affair is a conſtitution of free ſovereign grace, conveying not only pardon, but eternal life, in ſuch a way as became him, "for whom are all "things, and by whom are all things, viz. by making the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſuffering. And this leads to another view of the ſame perſon, who is the Great High Prieſt over the houſe of God, and which we find much inſiſted on, viz. that *he is given to be head over all things to his church*, and every particular member of it; of whom the firſt Adam was a figure, and who accordingly received from his Father all that life, ſpiritual and eternal life, lodged in

his hand, (himſelf calls it the grant of the kingdom); but upon terms incomparably harder than the firſt man's; even no leſs than perfect obedience unto the death, and the making his ſoul a ſacrifice for ſin. He accordingly finiſhed the work, and was made perfect through ſufferings; and by this acquired a perfect right to all the fullneſs of perfect life, that the grant ſhould come free, without any the leaſt burden, to every ſoul who will receive it from his hand, and be content to hold it merely by his right, the righteouſneſs of God.

As theſe are only two different views of one and the ſame thing, ſo it is evident, that both of them hold forth a very near relation and union ſubſiſting between Chriſt, and thoſe who flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before them, and ſhelter themſelves under his ſacrifice, which cannot be done without a very feeling acknowledgement of the forfeiture, and the perfect juſtice of it, renouncing and giving up their life, in terms of law, whenever it ſhall pleaſe the ſovereign judge to order execution, which our Lord calls, "denying one's ſelf, taking up his croſs, "and following him." Thus, and thus only, they can have communion or fellowſhip

ſhip with him in his ſufferings, and be made conformable unto him in his death. This cannot be done but by doing as he did, when he gave up the life he had from Adam, ſubmitted to the righteous ſentence, magnified the law, and made it honourable, by acknowledging the perfect juſtice of the lawgiver in the ſtrongeſt manner; and thus joining him in his death, by believing what he did for them, and following his example in dying, and being buried with him. Their old man, the child of Adam, is crucified and put to death with him, that the body of ſin may be deſtroyed, that henceforth they ſhould not ſerve ſin: "for he "that is dead is freed from ſin," nor has the law any further hold of him.

But they are not left there; this Apoſtle tells us, Rom. vi. 5. "that if we are plant-"ed together in the likeneſs of his death, "we ſhall be planted likewiſe in a con-"formity to him in his reſurrection." So here, after his being *crucified with Chriſt*, he ſays, notwithſtanding his dying with Chriſt, *he yet lived*. And two ways he deſcribes this life: 1*ſt*, in the nature and tendency of it, it was living to God; and, 2*dly*,

by the peculiar principle of it, it *was not he who lived, but Chriſt lived in him.* All this, ſay the wiſe men of the world, is no more but metaphor, a ſtrong way of expreſſing a common thing; and can mean no more than right reaſon aſſuming its proper province, or, at moſt, reaſon enlightened by revealed facts, and theſe particularly which relate to Jeſus Chriſt, directing and influencing the man into a dutiful regard to God, the creator and ſovereign of the univerſe. And all beyond this, ſay they, is mere cant, and unintelligible jargon; and therefore branded with the cant name of *myſticiſm*, which means, no body knows what.

There is perhaps more truth in the firſt part of this, than the aſſerters of it are aware of. The religion of Jeſus, as he and his apoſtles have laid it, and freed from the interpolations of men, is really the moſt rational thing which ever appeared in the world; and indeed the only complete ſyſtem which we are to this day in poſſeſſion of. But for the reſt, we muſt believe, that the Apoſtle underſtood the affair; and knew as well how to deſcribe it properly as any who have come after

after him. That living to God is the end, the very eſſence of religion; and that the beſt account that can be given of the Chriſtian life, is, that it is not ſo properly they who live, as Chriſt that lives in them.

We have already ſeen how thoſe who were under the law, and bound by its curſe, could not live to God in any ſenſe; they could live by the world, and live to the purpoſes of the world: and our Lord, and his apoſtles after him, ſay very plainly, that they lived for the devil, for they did his works; and lived by the devil, for he it is, the Apoſtle ſays, who works effectually in the children of diſobedience, and leads them captive at his will. But they cannot receive, nor ſo much as know, the things of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned. To live to God, then, is the ſame thing as to live by him, and to live for him, as his ſervants, and properly to be employed as he pleaſes; his bond ſervants, being no more their own, but bought with a price, no leſs a price than the invaluable blood of the Son of God.

But how ſhall they who were to all intents and purpoſes dead to God, and all the concerns of the ſpiritual world, live to God?

God? Surely they must be made alive first; and that cannot be done but by an act of free sovereign grace, pardoning past offences. But that could do no more but continue them in the possession of the life which they had; and that was but the life of flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. Eternal life, the life which spirits live, is all lodged in Christ; and "he who hath the Son, hath "life; and he who hath not the Son, hath "not life." Through him, then, it must be conveyed. The trial made in the first, and only perfect mere man, gives sufficient evidence, that such a valuable possession cannot be trusted in any inferior hand; and if ever we come to know what life is, we shall find, that it cannot be lodged in any hand, but one who has the Spirit and power of God at his dispoſal. Such is the blessed Jesus; and thus he gives his Spirit, dividing his several gifts according as he will. "If any man have not "the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;" and if his Spirit be in them, he himself is there also. If they live by the Spirit, he lives in them in the plainest and most proper sense, and without any figure or metaphor

taphor at all. It was not Paul who lived, but Chriſt lived in him, in the ſtricteſt and moſt proper ſenſe; and more ſo than the wiſeſt of us, in our preſent ſtate, are capable of apprehending.

I was ſaying, to live to God is to devote ourſelves to him, and his work and ſervice. And if any ſhould put the queſtion the Jews put to our Lord, John vi. 28. "What ſhall we do that we may work the "works of God?" we have his anſwer to it who certainly beſt underſtood it, "This is "the work of God, that ye believe on him "whom he hath ſent." This is the only way that man can do any thing for God; and all that the beſt believers do, or can do, is but giving him the glory due unto his name, and acknowledging his grace. And this is the ſingular ſpecialty of his ſervice, that all the profit of their labour redounds to themſelves. Their maſter needs none, and can receive none. The Apoſtle underſtood his maſter's direction; *The life he lived in the fleſh* was, he ſays, *by the faith of the Son of God:* and where this is wanting, all that can be done without it, is but affronting God in the baſeſt manner; for what the Apoſtle ſays is evident

vident in the nature of the thing: "He that "believes not his teſtimony, or record, "concerning his Son, makes him a liar," and treats him as ſuch.

Whoever has ſo far conſidered this teſtimony, as to know any thing of Chriſt, cannot miſs to find in him the higheſt evidence God could give of his love to the world; and that he has ſtated it in ſuch a manner, that no one perſon has more or leſs reaſon than another to believe it. All who hear it, are called, are commanded, to believe in him whom he hath ſent; and all have equal encouragement and aſſurance of ſucceſs in this way, inſomuch that, ſtrictly and properly, faith is no more but the application of the general declarations in the teſtimony to one's ſelf. Thus we ſee the Apoſtle took it; and ſets an example to us. He does not pretend any particular revelation of the love of God, and his ever-bleſſed Son, to himſelf more than to others; nor did he need any; and therefore pleaſes himſelf with a concluſion, ariſing ſo naturally and neceſſarily from the truth as it is in Jeſus; and concludes with the ſtrongeſt confidence of faith, *who loved me, and gave himſelf for me.* And the Apoſtle

Apoſtle has taught us, in the inſtance of Abraham, Rom. iv. 20. that the ſtronger one's faith, and the leſs wavering and doubting, the greater is the glory the believer gives to God. The whole goſpel ſpeaks the ſame language that Chriſt did to Jairus in a very deſperate-like caſe, *Fear not; only believe.* And it would be much to our advantage, that we put to ourſelves the queſtion Jeſus put to Peter, when, to all human ſenſe and reaſon, he was inevitably to be ſwallowed up in the raging ſea. Our Lord had, at his own requeſt, bid him come to him, walking on the water: but though he ventured boldly, and ſet out fair, he was afraid, and begun to ſink: *O thou of little faith*, ſaid his maſter, *wherefore didſt thou doubt?* He could find no reaſon; and leſs, if poſſible, will any one find in this caſe, who takes in the whole truth as it is in Jeſus.

I know not how it hath happened, that many, even ſerious people, not only do in fact, but have even been taught, to ſoothe themſelves in the want of this aſſurance of faith; as if it were their unhappineſs, but not their ſin. But ſurely they muſt be egregiouſly miſtaken who make

ſuch a concluſion: for nothing can be more certain, than that ſo much as there is of abatement of the moſt perfect confidence of faith, ſo much there is of unbelief, Rom. v. 20.: and I hope no body will ſay that is no ſin. It is true, there may be faith where there is much doubting; nay, one may ſay, there can be no doubting where there is not ſome faith: but weak faith cannot fail to make a weak Chriſtian. And if the Apoſtle John's account of the riſe and progreſs of the love of God in the heart of man, (which, by the way, is really writing the law of God there), may be credited, juſt ſo far as the love of God to us is known and believed, ſo far will this law of love be planted and rooted in the heart; for "we love "him, becauſe he firſt loved us," 1 John iv. 19. So very ill-grounded, and indeed very fooliſh, is the cant which has been echoed from mouth to mouth ever ſince the Apoſtle's days, that preaching faith in Chriſt, and the free ſovereign grace of God in him, is prejudicial to the practice of holineſs, and tends to ſoothe people in a courſe of ſin. Surely the love of God

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is holineſs, and perfect love is perfect holineſs: for all the duties God has commanded are no other than the native exerciſes and actings of it, and what perfect love would perform though they had never been commanded.

But high as this apoſtle was exalted, and ſo nearly united to Chriſt, as to be one ſpirit, and to have one life with him, and thence of courſe to live by Chriſt living in him; yet he was ſtill *in the fleſh*; not as men naturally are, who cannot pleaſe God ſo long as they continue in that ſtate; but he was in the *body*, and therefore abſent from the Lord, as it is written, 2 Cor. v. 6. This vail of fleſh hides the ſpiritual world from us; ſo that we muſt either depend on the report God has condeſcended to make of the ſtate of that world, or be altogether ignorant of it. "We walk by faith, not by ſight:" and thus the Apoſtle tells us, that the whole of his *living was by the faith of the Son of God, who loved him, and gave himſelf for him.*

By this expreſſion, *the faith of the Son of God*, may be underſtood Chriſt's perſonal faith, as it cannot be doubted that the man

Jeſus, while he was on earth, lived in the faith of the Father's gift and promiſe, and thus ſtands on record for our imitation. Compare Pſal. cxvi. 10. as applied by the Apoſtle, 2 Cor. iv. 13.

And thus it leads us to the cauſe of the Chriſtian's life, that it is all owing to what the Redeemer did and ſuffered in the ſtrength of this his faith.

But though this be true, yet it ſeems rather to anſwer the Apoſtle's preſent views better, to underſtand the expreſſion of that faith which Chriſt is the object of; and thus the faith of Chriſt, and the faith of the goſpel, of which he is the great ſubject, will be the ſame. It is of no great moment which way we take it, as indeed they cannot be ſeparated. All Chriſt's obedience, even his death, which finiſhed it, could have been nothing to us, had it not been for the view the grant and promiſe of his heavenly Father ſet it in. It was this, and the faith or belief of this, that made it a ſacrifice, and fit to anſwer all the purpoſes of a ſacrifice for the ſins of the world. And, on the other hand, Chriſt is ſo much the very ſubſtance of the whole ſyſtem of grace, that without him we can make no conſiſtent

conſiſtent ſenſe of it. And if we know him as he is ſet forth unto us in the teſtimony of God, we cannot miſs to ſee, at the ſame time, the whole plan concerted in the perfection of wiſdom.

I need not ſtand to obſerve here, how this ſame faith of Chriſt is at once the great regulator, and effectual ſupporter, of the Chriſtian life, or living to God. Something has been ſaid already, and we ſhall meet with it again, where the Apoſtle reſolves the whole into faith, working by love. The whole is a ſyſtem of grace; and where-ever that is underſtood, believed, and acquieſced in, it teaches effectually, in the firſt place, to deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts; and then to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in a preſent world, Tit. ii. 12. What pity is it that ſuch grace ſhould be fruſtrated, and received in vain? and yet fruſtrated it muſt be, where-ever the deſigns and purpoſes of it are not attained, either by not being believed at all, or ſo weakly and imperfectly as not to form the heart upon it, into thorough acknowledgements of gratitude and love. This is what the Apoſtle was ſo careful

ful about; and could not bear to ſee rendered fruitleſs, by drawing theſe Galatians and others to place their confidence and hopes on the law of Moſes, or whatever the buſy fancies of men ſhould ſet up in its ſtead. But this we ſhall likewiſe have occaſion to meet with in its proper place; our buſineſs here is, to lay hold on every piece of inſtruction and caution, whether by way of example, or precept, that we be not drawn away, as theſe Galatians were in danger of being, and many have been ſince, by pretenſions not half ſo ſpecious as thoſe of the Judaizers were; which yet the Apoſtle oppoſes with ſuch vehemency and zeal. And ſurely he was no bigot, but had great good reaſon for oppoſing it; for if righteouſneſs was to be had by law, then Chriſt died in vain. "He is the end of the law for "righteouſneſs to all that believe." But if that end could have been, or yet can be, anſwered by any other means, what ſhall we ſay? Was it like the wiſdom of God, that he ſhould not ſpare his own Son, the ſon of his love, but give him up to the death for the ſalvation of a periſhing world,

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could the ſame purpoſe have been as well anſwered without him?

CHAP. iii. 1.——5.

1. *O fooliſh Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth, before whoſe eyes Jeſus Chriſt hath been evidently ſet forth, crucified among you?* 2. *This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?* 3. *Are ye ſo fooliſh? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the fleſh?* 4. *Have ye ſuffered ſo many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.* 5. *He therefore that miniſtereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

WArmed, as the Apoſtle was, and he muſt have been very much ſo, on the fair view he had been taking of the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus, where it is hard to ſay, whether perfect wiſdom, or goodneſs, appears moſt, but both together are cloſely united in that wonderful ſyſtem which centres in Jeſus Chriſt, he makes no ſcruple at giving the Galatians the title they deſerved, and upbraiding them with their folly. Something may be ſaid for thoſe who never heard of Chriſt, and

and knew nothing of that God who is love, the only true character of the great creator and ſovereign of the univerſe; which yet is not to be diſcovered by creatures in our circumſtances, but in Jeſus Chriſt; ſuch indeed merit the utmoſt exertion of pity and compaſſion. But for thoſe who have had Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified, ſet before them, as he is in the goſpel, the record which God has made concerning his Son; for them to ſet up any thing elſe, either in his ſtead, or to ſupplement his all-ſufficiency; words cannot deſcribe their folly, if it be done ignorantly; nor the perverſeneſs, if on any other motive.

This was the unhappy caſe of theſe Galatians: Jeſus Chriſt had been ſet forth, and the teſtimony of God, his counſels of grace, as they were laid in him, opened up to them; they had the knowledge of the truth, and, which is more, they had received it; and yet they had ſuffered themſelves to be drawn in by a ſet of men who ſet up for teachers of the law, while yet they underſtood not what they ſaid, nor whereof they affirmed, 1. Tim. i. 7. to be drawn in by them to believe, that notwithſtanding of all that Chriſt had done,

done, and undertaken to do, they could not be ſaved, unleſs they were circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, and kept his law.

Our tranſlators, following the punctuation in ſome Greek copies, have made the Apoſtle ſay what is at leaſt very hard to make good ſenſe of, in a conſiſtency with truth, That *Jeſus was ſet before the eyes of the Galatians crucified among them.* We need not ſpend words to find a ſenſe wherein this may hold true. It is certain he was crucified at Jeruſalem, not in Galatia; neither does the Apoſtle ſay he was, in any ſenſe whatſoever; but only that Chriſt crucified was plainly ſet before their eyes in that goſpel which Paul preached to them. Nor is there any the leaſt confuſion in the words of the text, except what is occaſioned by placing a comma where it was not wanted, by which *crucified* is joined with *among you*, when the Apoſtle evidently connects *among you* with *ſet forth, and crucified* with *Jeſus Chriſt.* And thus literally his words expreſs the plain fact as it was.

We have already ſeen the Apoſtle ſetting the whole affair of Chriſt, and him

crucified, in ſo clear a light, that it will be needleſs to ſay any thing further, but to take the whole, as the Apoſtle does, for very truth, and on which he founds his charge, and his after reaſoning on the caſe before him. Only, from the peculiar ſtreſs the Apoſtle here, and every where in his writings, lays upon the *croſs* of Chriſt, one cannot help obſerving, that the proper ſtanding for taking a fair and full view of Chriſt is at his croſs. Thence one is naturally led to look backward, to ſee who he was, and how he came there: A proſpect which diſplays, in the ſtrongeſt light, his and his heavenly Father's aſtoniſhing love and kindneſs to mankind. And when we look forward to his reſurrection, and the glory that followed, the grounds of our faith and hope in him, and in God through him, are laid ſo deep and ſtrong, that it is really aſtoniſhing how one can ſee him as he is ſet before us in the goſpel, without the warmeſt ſentiments of gratitude and love, and ſuch thorough confidence in him, as the moſt perfect friendſhip, demonſtrated by the ſtrongeſt proofs and evidence, deſerves

and

and requires. Chriſtianity is a religion of love.

This gives the key to what the Apoſtle had ſaid of their *not obeying the truth*; and, as the world goes, it will be thought no improper queſtion, What is that *truth* the Apoſtle ſpeaks of? There are many little ones: for there are as many truths as there are facts; and men, even thoſe who are called wiſe men or philoſophers, have been ſo keen in the purſuit of them, that they have overlooked that which only deſerves the name. When our Lord "witneſſed a good confeſſion before Pontius "Pilate," as it is expreſſed 1 Tim. vi. 13. he ſaid, that he was born and came into the world to bear witneſs to *the truth*. Pilate aſked him, *what is truth?* but had not patience to ſtay for an anſwer: nor needed he; for Chriſt had acknowledged himſelf to be the King of the Jews; the ſame he had often repeated and inculcated during the courſe of his public miniſtry. He gives the whole of it in few words, John xiv. 6. *I am the truth*. He joins with it indeed, *the way, and the life*; not as if they were different things, as the one holds forth the uſe of the truth, (as by him men come to the Father), and the other the tendency

and iſſue of it: for they who have him have life. And with great juſtice does he bear the title of *truth*; for whoſoever knows him, knows all that is worth knowing. There are indeed numbers of detached pieces which do, or which ſome people perſuade themſelves do belong to religion, and in that view, have been rather more minded: but this we may ſay with confidence, that whatever is not neceſſarily connected with the truth as it is in Jeſus, or which can be learned and practiſed without learning Chriſt, ought not, and may not, be received as the truth, or any part of it. Men will needs be dreſſing out the naked truth to their own fancy, or to recommend it to others, perhaps more ignorant, and of courſe more fanciful, than themſelves; but the beauty and efficacy of the truth never appear in their full ſtrength when the plain ſimplicity of all is any how defaced. The Apoſtle John's account of the teſtimony of God is ſhort plain, and ſtands evident in Chriſt: "In him he gives eternal life." But ſo ſtrangely has it been imbarraſſed by thoſe who have taken upon themſelves to explain it, that a Chriſtian of ordinary capacity

capacity knows not what to make of it, but that it is ſomething greatly above his reach, and which none but very learned men can underſtand. Whence it neceſſarily follows, that inſtead of taking the truth as it lies in Chriſt, plain and undiſguiſed, they are led to take up with what this, or the other man, whom they are ſome how led into an eſteem of, have ſaid upon it. And thus, as the prophet ſays, "they ſteal the word of the Lord "one from another."

We are next to conſider what our tranſlators render *obeying the truth*; and properly enough if it be taken in its full extent. Thus, to obey the truth, muſt imply believing it: and, in the next place, to be ſo throughly perſuaded of the goodneſs as well as the reality of it, as to acquieſce and reſt in it with that pleaſure and delight which the aſſurance of important and beneficial truths certainly form the heart into: and both theſe the word the Apoſtle uſes naturally ſignifies. But though there are a number of merely ſpeculative little truths, which can anſwer no purpoſe by the moſt certain knowledge of them, but to amuſe, and, as commonly happens, to puff

puff up the vain mind, the truth of Chriſt is none of that kind. As it is of greateſt moment, ſo it is of the moſt practical nature; ſo practical, that where-ever it is believed and received, it not only infers a converſation ſuch as anſwers the goſpel of Chriſt, and that takes in the whole duty of man, Phil. i. 27.; but where-ever it is believed, and the heart of the man reconciled to Jeſus the truth, and perfectly pleaſed with him, Chriſt is in them, and they in him. He lives in them by his ſpirit; and the ſame mind is in them which was in him; the ſame ſentiments and judgement of things, and of courſe the ſame ſtate of affections and paſſions, the ſprings of all their actions; and thence the whole courſe of their converſation is formed upon that unexceptionable pattern and ſtandard of human perfection. One may indeed ſay he has faith, who has no works; but we have good authority to ſay, he is a vain man who ſays ſo, James ii. 20.; for the real belief of the truth cannot poſſibly ſubſiſt without working by love.

On this ſtate of the Chriſtian life, and particularly the influence of the Spirit of

Chriſt

Chriſt on the Chriſtian life, the Apoſtle is very naturally led to put the queſtion, verſ. 2. on which he reſts the whole of the cauſe, *This only I would know, &c.* And indeed it ſets the folly of thoſe who had given any ear to the ſeducers in ſo glaring a light, that he could impute it to nothing but faſcination, or what has been called *witchcraft*: for nothing like a rational account could be made of ſuch conduct. He ſuppoſes they *had received the Spirit*; for they could not be Chriſtians, or believers in Chriſt, without it; and notwithſtanding their unaccountable wavering, he ſtill treats them as ſuch. And happy had it been for the Chriſtian world, if thoſe who aſſumed the direction of eccleſiaſtical affairs in after times had followed the example the Apoſtle hath ſet them; and he knew perfectly, "that if "any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, "he is none of his."

It is really aſtoniſhing, that after all our Lord and his apoſtles have ſaid upon this ſubject, there ſhould any be found, even among thoſe who profeſs themſelves his diſciples, who ſhould have been at ſuch pains to perſuade the world, that nothing is meant by the word *Spirit* in this

this caſe, but the word of the goſpel, in oppoſition to the letter of the Jewiſh law. It need not be refuſed, that the goſpel may, and ſometimes does, bear this ſenſe in the New-Teſtament writings; for the ſame reaſon that our Lord ſays, John vi. 63. that the words he ſpake to his diſciples, "were ſpirit and life;" becauſe ſpirit and life were conveyed by them. And hence the Apoſtle calls this ſame goſpel, the miniſtration of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 8.

Our Lord tells Nicodemus, who was much at a loſs to conceive how a man could be born again, John iii. that this gift and operation of the Spirit is one of thoſe heavenly things which cannot be diſcovered by our imperfect perceptive powers, in our preſent ſtate; and can be perceived only by his operations, effects, and fruits. But as theſe effects are as real, though of another kind, as thoſe of material and ſenſible cauſes, the cauſe itſelf muſt be likewiſe as real, and the effects bear in them the nature of the cauſe which produceth them. Thus, in the regeneration, or new birth, our Lord ſpeaks of, there is as really a new creature brought into the ſpiritual world, as in our common

birth

birth there is one brought into this groſs outward one. And they carry, in their very nature, the marks of their different originals: "That which is born of the fleſh, "is fleſh; and that which is born of the "Spirit, is ſpirit," John iii. 6.

I have quoted theſe words of our Lord, becauſe here we find the original of theſe two terms, which are ſo often uſed in the New-Teſtament writings, and which we find the Apoſtle uſing in the preſent argument; and, if I miſtake not, we are here furniſhed with the right key for opening to us the true ſenſe of theſe terms. No body pretends to doubt, that *fleſh*, as it ſtands in our Lord's diſcourſe, denotes the natural man, the mere child of Adam, and the fabric, conſtitution, and ſtructure of that kind of creature, with all the perfections and powers neceſſary for fitting it for the ſtation aſſigned it in this world, into which it is entered by the firſt, which we call the natural birth. And ſo far as theſe powers can go, ſo far, but no farther, may his actings and productions extend. They are all but the works of a being whoſe nature is *fleſh*; and can never exceed the principle or cauſe from

which they proceed; and very properly take their denomination from it. And thus we find this term conſtantly applied to man in his natural ſtate; and to the whole of what the mere child of Adam can do, without any higher principle. There is another we find as frequently made uſe of in the apoſtolic writings, and applied preciſely in the ſame manner, *the old man.* The deſignation is taken from the ſtate of a Chriſtian born again, and created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works; for, by the Apoſtle's rule, Heb. viii. 13. when there is a *new* man, that fixes the title of *old* to what was before.

Man, in his natural ſtate, is evidently made for a preſent world, the world which his firſt birth entered him into. There he finds the means of ſubſiſting; and there he finds all the pleaſures and enjoyments of life; and confined there, by his limited powers, and the righteous ſentence of his creator and ſovereign, he muſt be an utter ſtranger to the ſpiritual and eternal world, and the way in which ſpirits live there; except that he is capable of taking in a report of them, if it comes any how to his ears. This way of living

ving lies directly oppoſite to that kind of life which ſpirits live. Hence the old man is deſcribed as "corrupt, through deceitful luſts," Eph. iv. 22. From which, and ſuch other expreſſions, occaſion has been taken to repreſent theſe terms, *the old man*, and *the fleſh*, as importing no more but that corruption which ſin has brought upon the human nature; and which, they ſay, the inſpired writers, by a bold figure, ſpeak of as a body, and a real perſon: and many fine flouriſhes have been made upon it. But, after all, this corruption, whatever it is, can be no more but a quality, which cannot exiſt but in ſome ſubject; and what they call the luſts and affections of it, are really the natural cravings and appetites, the deſires and affections, of the corrupt man. It ſeems, therefore, much too bold a figure to be made uſe of in a ſerious diſcourſe; and for which, I believe, there is not a parallel to be found in any writer whatſoever.

But this is not all. We find the *old man* very expreſsly diſtinguiſhed from his deeds, Col. iii. 9.; from his luſts, Eph. iv. 22.; and *the fleſh*, from the luſts and affections of it, Gal. v. 16. 24. And when we are told,

Rom. vi. of our being crucified, dead, and buried, and riſing again with Chriſt, into a new and endleſs life; ſhall we ſay, our natural corruption, this body of ſin, is to be underſtood in all this; particularly when the Apoſtle ſaid of himſelf, in ſuch plain terms, that he *was crucified with Chriſt?* which cannot import leſs than renouncing and giving up the life he had from Adam, as what he had no more occaſion for, being provided with one infinitely better, by Chriſt living in him, and he accordingly living by the faith of Chriſt. Surely he was the unhappieſt of all mankind who ever pretended to relate a fact, if he really meant no more than that he had forſaken his old way of living, and betaken himſelf to a new courſe: and he muſt have been as bad a reaſoner, as it is evident this conduces nothing to the purpoſe he then had in view.

I ſhould not however have ſaid ſo much here, had not this ſame miſunderſtanding of the words of the Spirit of God, been improved, to ſupport that unhappy ſyſtem of moral government which has been ſet up againſt the grace of the goſpel. For if theſe expreſſions be dwindled away

away into metaphor, the new birth, or being born of the Spirit, the new creature, the quickening the dead ſinner, and the life our Lord promiſes to all that come to him, &c. muſt all paſs for figure and metaphor too; and what the Apoſtle here ſays of the Galatians *receiving the Spirit*, means nothing but a mere change in their way of living, while the man, and his principle of life, and natural powers, continued preciſely the ſame: and thus Chriſtians are as effectually brought back to live by law, as the ſeducers attempted to bring the Galatians to live by the law of Moſes.

But we have not ſo learned Chriſt, if ſo be we have heard and learned of him as the truth is in Jeſus. If he did not either deceive or trifle with Nicodemus, there is a Spirit of which all who believe in him are born. And what is born of this Spirit is a real thing, *a new creature*; and by this birth is entered an inhabitant of the ſpiritual and eternal world, as really as any child of Adam is of this periſhing one. The Galatians were at no loſs to know what the Apoſtle meant, by their *receiving the Spirit*: they had no doubt been taught how the Spirit of God was

loſt

loſt to mankind by the entrance of ſin; and how the ſame was reſtored in Chriſt Jeſus, according to the promiſe often repeated concerning the latter times: they had felt the effect of it in themſelves, as well as heard and ſeen the ſame gift conferred on the apoſtles, and other Chriſtians; and had no occaſion to aſk him, as our modern diſputants do, what he meant by it. They knew it was that Holy Spirit, by whom Chriſt had conveyed a new ſpiritual life, and light, into their dead ſouls, and dark minds; by which he conveyed his life, and lived in them. But what can be done with thoſe who know no difference between faith and fancy, between what is ſpiritual and purely imaginary? The difference cannot be perceived, but by what the Apoſtle calls the ſpiritual diſcerning; and that cannot be attained but by being born of the Spirit. The God who made man what he is, can certainly, if he ſo pleaſes, either give new powers and faculties, which we have no notion of, or raiſe the old ones to what pitch of perfection he pleaſes. By what faculty, or perceptive power, did Eliſha, and his ſervant when his eyes were opened,

ed, ſee the mountain covered with horſes of fire, and chariots of fire, which neither the Syrian army, nor inhabitants of the city, perceived at all? or was there no ſuch thing there? So Stephen ſaw Chriſt at the Father's right hand.

The Apoſtle's queſtion anſwers itſelf: No body could pretend the Spirit was given, or that they *received it, by any works* that could be performed in obedience to the *law*. God himſelf gave an irrefragable evidence that it was not. For during the ſpace of about four hundred years, at leaſt from the death of Malachy until the time of Chriſt's appearance, no ſuch thing was heard of among the ſtricteſt obſervers of that law; nor is there ſo much as a hint to be found in all the prophets but what referred to that time. It was a gift, a matter of free ſovereign grace; and there could not be a greater affront offered to the giver, than to pretend to deſerve it by their ſervice; not to mention what the Apoſtle had ſaid but juſt before, that no perſon whatſoever who was under the law, could poſſibly live to God. Indeed it was not ſo much as pretended, that the gift of the Spirit

came,

came, or could come, by the law of Moſes; and we may ſay the ſame of every other law which men have imagined, or can imagine, for themſelves.

It muſt then be by what the Apoſtle calls *the hearing of faith.* This expreſſion may be underſtood, either of what they heard, viz. the faith, or the word of the goſpel; or of their actual hearing; and that is a word of very extenſive import, and the very ſame with obeying the truth he had been juſt ſpeaking of: "Faith comes "by hearing, and hearing by the word of "God." But neither the ſpeaking nor hearing the word, will profit, unleſs it be mixed with faith in them that hear it. And the Apoſtle wiſely makes uſe of an expreſſion which ſtrongly includes both, viz. *the hearing of faith.* The word of the goſpel is the means by which the Spirit is conveyed, called therefore the *miniſtration of the Spirit:* but then, in order to the production of this great effect, it muſt be ſo heard as to be believed. And hence it is that we find, not only the gift of the Spirit, but all the effects and conſequences of it, attributed promiſcuouſly to the word of the goſpel, and the faith of the hearer. And hence neceſſarily

neceſſarily follows a corollary, which, I am afraid, will be reckoned a paradox with many, viz. that no man can be a Chriſtian in any degree, without being, in ſome degree, inſpired. The Apoſtle has ſaid it roundly, "If any man have not the "Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9.

Nothing could more fully juſtify the title the Apoſtle had given them, nor ſet their folly in a ſtronger light, than the ſecond queſtion he puts to them, verſ. 3. That they had *begun in the Spirit* is abundantly plain; for it was by his bringing them acquainted with the goſpel of Chriſt that they were delivered from that horrible condition they were lying under in their Gentile ſtate, without God, and without hope in the world. But by the hearing of faith, believing the teſtimony which God had given concerning his Son, they had received the promiſed Spirit, the earneſt of the promiſed inheritance; and thus the inheritance was made as ſure to them as it could be made, before they knew any thing at all of the law of Moſes; which yet the bigotted zealots for that law wanted to perſuade them, that they could not be ſaved with-

out. And thus, however they made a ſort of acknowledgement of Chriſt, and of the neceſſity of what he had done, to open the way unto eternal life; yet according to them it was by the obſervance of that law that they muſt enter into it; the pattern which our modern advocates for their baſtard holineſs, exactly copy.

All this is abundantly plain; but how the Apoſtle comes to call the law, or the obſervance of it, *fleſh*, needs ſome illuſtration. The Apoſtle, on another occaſion, calls them carnal ordinances. They were all ſuch as might be obſerved with the greateſt exactneſs, by men who were ſtrictly and properly *in the fleſh*, mere natural men; and they could contribute nothing toward the change of their ſtate: for they were weak and unprofitable; their ſacrifices could not take away ſin; nor all their waſhings and purifications cleanſe from the defilement of it: the moſt they could do was, to ſanctify to the purification of the fleſh, and procure them acceſs to a wordly ſanctuary. The promiſe to, and the bleſſing of Abraham, as we ſhall ſee by and by, were continued and handed down through all the periods of the law; and whenever theſe ritual pre-

cepts

cepts were ſeparated from the promiſe, and what they were figures of, the works of the law became as much works of the fleſh, as fulfilling any of the other luſts of it; and which accordingly we find God expreſſing the utmoſt abhorrence and deteſtation of, on many occaſions. What folly muſt it then have been, for thoſe who had received Chriſt, the all-ſufficient Saviour, and had him and his Spirit dwelling and abiding in them, and all the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus, for their ſupport and proviſion, fitting them up into living temples, a habitation of God through the Spirit; for thoſe who were thus provided in all-ſufficiency, to turn to theſe weak and beggarly elements, which could never profit thoſe who were exerciſed therein?

As the Apoſtle had a perfect knowledge of human nature, he knew well how to apply himſelf to it on every occaſion; and frequently intermixes tender and affecting hints with his moſt ſolemn inſtructions, and ſharpeſt rebukes, ſo as to move them more effectually. It does not appear what the Galatians had ſuffered by their embracing Chriſtianity, as the Apoſtle had taught it; nor from what quarter their ſufferings ſprung; but

he ſays, verſ. 4. they *had ſuffered*, and *ſuffered many things*. It was needleſs to give them the particulars; they felt them, and knew them well: and moſt likely they came, either directly and immediately from the Jews, or at their inſtigation, as we find all his own did. They could not bear to have the Gentiles brought ſo near upon a level with themſelves, as the well-grounded hope of eternal life brought them; and even the believers among them, we find, fell very foul on Peter himſelf, for treating Cornelius and his friends on that footing before they were circumciſed, and were incorporated with them. But of all things the moſt irritating was, the contempt they thought their law, and the traditions of their fathers, were expoſed to, by putting the whole of ſalvation on Chriſt, and making faith in him more available than all that their law could do for them.

This conjecture is conſiderably ſtrengthened by what the Apoſtle ſays, chap. v. 11. that had he preached circumciſion, the offence of the croſs would have ceaſed; and, chap. vi. 12. that the true reaſon why the Judaizers were ſo zealous for circumciſion was, that they might avoid

void perſecution. And this gives us one plain ſenſe of what he ſays of their having ſuffered ſo many things *in vain*, or to no purpoſe; which might eaſily have been avoided, by complying at firſt with the Jewiſh zealots. But he appears by what he adds, *if it be yet in vain*, to have had a higher aim. They had not yet thoroughly yielded to their ſeducers; they were in ſuch ſuſpenſe, that it was hard to ſay where they would reſt. If they ſtood firm in their ſubmiſſion and obedience to the truth, their ſufferings were not in vain: they were ſuffering with Chriſt, and had the faireſt, or rather the moſt aſſured proſpect, of reigning with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. But if they complied, they renounced their obedience to the truth; and by having recourſe to the law, they in effect renounced Chriſt, and the grace of God in him, as he tells them roundly afterwards; and then their ſufferings ſhould be indeed *in vain*, and could anſwer no purpoſe at all. How ſkilfully, how gently, does he touch, and yet how ſoundly does he ſearch the dangerous ſore!

Having thus hinted what could not miſs to engage their reflection on what they were

were about, he proceeds in the argument, which the query, verſ. 4. is ſo far from interrupting, that it conſiderably forwards the effect of it. They had received the promiſe and gift of eternal life held forth in the goſpel; they had received the Spirit of life, a good and valid earneſt; and, by receiving this Spirit, they had received the very life of Chriſt, and were entered on living by him, and on that grace which is in him; and all this by the bare *hearing of faith*, not only without any help from the law, but when they were abſolute ſtrangers to it. He now directs their attention to thoſe who miniſtered the Spirit to them. He ſpeaks indeed as of one perſon, thus to turn their eyes upon himſelf, by whoſe miniſtry they had firſt believed: but he ſpeaks as in the preſent time, not *miniſtered*, but *who miniſtereth* the Spirit, ſo as to take in all who were employed in the ſame work after him. One cannot paſs this over without a reflection. What a ſolemn thing the work of the miniſtry is! The goſpel is the miniſtration of the Spirit; and the buſineſs of thoſe that preach it is, to miniſter or convey the Spirit, the Spirit of God, and his bleſſed Son. If this

this be not done, nothing is done at all. And "who is ſufficient for theſe things?" But however Paul and his aſſociates, nay all who ſucceed them, may by preaching the goſpel be ſaid in an inferior ſenſe to miniſter the Spirit; yet the Apoſtle's words very naturally point to a higher hand, viz. to him who has the fullneſs of the Spirit dwelling in him, and gives and with-holds it at pleaſure; and it is honour enough to the greateſt of the human kind to be employed under him. "Paul may plant, and A-"pollos may water; but it is God who "giveth the increaſe." In the ordinary courſe both go together; but there is an immenſe difference between them. Miniſters are co-workers with God, 2 Cor. vi. 1. but can do nothing without him; whereas he, when he pleaſes, can do every thing without them. However we underſtand it, the concluſion ſtrongly follows, that, by the order eſtabliſhed by the great Sovereign, it is only by the word of the goſpel, and hearing of faith, that the Spirit, with all his gifts, is conveyed to any of mankind, whether Jew or Gentile.

The ſame he ſays of *miracles*. Theſe were the interpoſals of divine power, by which

which God atteſted, and, as we ſay, ſealed the commiſſion he gave to his miniſters and ſervants, whom he ſent on ſpecial errands; and thus gave authority, and commanded reſpect, to the meſſage they were ſent to deliver. Theſe were very frequent, and in a manner common, among Chriſtians, while their faith was ſtrong, and Chriſtianity a new thing in the world. The principal and moſt extraordinary was, conferring the Holy Ghoſt by laying on the hands of the apoſtles, which appears to have been peculiar to the apoſtles, Acts viii. 14. *et ſeqq.* But the gifts of the Spirit were many and various; yet not at any one's choice or option, but as the holy Spirit divided them, according to his will. But as all theſe miracles and miraculous gifts were peculiar to believers in Chriſt, and all performed in his name, nor ever ſo much as attempted by any Jew, except once by the ſeven ſons of Sceva, to their utter confuſion, it was needleſs to draw the concluſion, the Galatians could not help doing it for themſelves, viz. that when Chriſt anſwered every valuable purpoſe to thoſe who received and believed on him, no deeds of law,

law, or legal obſervances, could make any addition or improvement; and therefore it muſt be the height of folly to burden one's ſelf with them.

But however plauſible this conſtruction may ſeem, and however well it may anſwer the Apoſtle's intention; yet there is another, which appears to ſuit both that and the context better, which has been adopted by the moſt judicious interpreters; and with this advantage, that it is the plain literal tranſlation of the Apoſtle's original. Thoſe who know any thing of that language, muſt know, that the word our tranſlators render *miracles*, properly ſignifies *mights*, or *powers*; and what they render ſimply *working*, is ſeldom or never made uſe of, but to import, *working inwardly*, and commonly working effectually in one. And thus the words will run: "He that miniſters or conveys to "you the Spirit, and worketh effectually "in you all thoſe powers you find your"ſelves, and obſerve others, endued "with," &c. All power of every kind is of God, the ſame who gives his Spirit in what meaſure and degree he pleaſes. The

Apoſtle ſpeaks of being "ſtrengthened with "all might by the Spirit in the inner man," Eph. iii. 16. and Col. i. 11. where he uſes the ſame word; and ſays of himſelf, that "he could do all things through Chriſt "ſtrengthening him." Theſe are greatly higher powers than any external miracles; the power by which theſe are wrought being but one of the loweſt. And thus the Apoſtle's argument comes out ſtrong and plain. It is an appeal to what they felt, or might feel, in themſelves. And when all this was done by the mere *hearing of faith*, the belief of the truth as it is in Jeſus, the Apoſtle's concluſion comes out ſtrong and convincing, viz. That it muſt be the greateſt folly that can be imagined, to have recourſe to the law for what was done ſo completely in Chriſt; and which the law, though really veſted, as it never was, with the power of conveying life, could make no addition to. It was forſaking a ſtation where there is abſolute ſafety, for one where they are every moment in danger of a new forfeiture. And ſuch is the ſtation our wiſe patrons of a righteous moral government are ſo fond of.

CHAP. iii. 6.——12.

6. *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs.* 7. *Know ye therefore, that they which are of faith, the ſame are the children of Abraham.* 8. *And the ſcripture foreſeeing that God would juſtify the heathen through faith, preached before the goſpel unto Abraham, ſaying, In thee ſhall all nations be bleſſed.* 9. *So then they which be of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.* 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe: for it is written, Curſed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* 11. *But that no man is juſtified by the law in the ſight of God, it is evident: for, The juſt ſhall live by faith.* 12. *And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doth them, ſhall live in them.*

THE Apoſtle having, in a very deciſive manner, ſet forth the excellency of faith in Chriſt, incomparably above what the warmeſt advocates for Judaiſm could pretend in behalf of the law, proceeds in a very maſterly way, to illuſtrate and confirm what he had ſaid by the example of Abraham, whom the Jews profeſſed to reverence as their father, and whom God himſelf had honoured with the high title of *his friend*. And ſurely, if it could be ſhown, that the

believing Galatians were preciſely in the ſame condition wherein Abraham was when he was ſo ſignally acknowledged of God, one would have thought that there needed no more to put an end for ever to the diſpute then on foot. It is worth obſerving how ſkilfully he introduces the compariſon: he ſlides into it in the ſimpleſt and moſt natural manner, as ſuggeſted to him by what he had been ſaying: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs.* The words are exactly thoſe of Moſes, ſo that no exception could be made on that ſide. And if we conſider the caſe of Abraham, in every view that can be taken of it, the more exactly it is ſtated, the more clearly will the juſtneſs of the Apoſtle's reaſoning appear.

The modern Jews, intending, as it would ſeem, to do honour to the memory of this father and founder of their nation, have forged a number of very ſilly ſtories concerning him, which it is not worth any one's while to repeat. We have his hiſtory given us pretty much at large, by Moſes himſelf. Idolatry had made great advances, and very likely had its riſe near about

bout the place where his family had their reſidence; and by what Joſhua ſays of them, Joſh. xxiv. 2. they were deeply tainted with it. How far Abraham himſelf was infected, we cannot ſay; but we have not ſo much as a hint of any thing extraordinary about him, when God diſtinguiſhed him by chuſing him to be the father and head of a new people; but we may be very ſure that he had nothing to merit ſuch ſingular favours. He had not yet obtained the character of a righteous man until he believed God; and that could not be until God gave him ſomething to believe. It is true, there was an original law founded in the benefit of creation; but that was broken, and had brought mankind under the curſe. A remedy however was prepared, and revealed in the promiſe of the ſeed of the woman; with a law of gratitude, and of love grafted upon it, which no doubt many believed: for Noah was not the only perſon who became heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith. This promiſe God had renewed to Abraham at his firſt calling; and he certainly believed it, for he obeyed the command which was ſupported by it. But

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no body was ever fooliſh enough to think, that his travelling from one country to another could make any part of his righteouſneſs, any further than as it was a ſign of his believing God, and the obedience of faith.

That promiſe was indeed very full, and comprehended all the promiſes that were made to him afterward. But it was in ſome ſort conditional. If Abraham had not ſhown both the truth and the ſtrength of his faith, by forſaking all, and going out, not knowing whither he went, he had no reaſon to expect the bleſſing. The caſe of the Galatians was exactly ſimilar to this: for neither could they have any benefit by the promiſe, unleſs they ſhould believe and follow out the purpoſes of the promiſed bleſſing. If one who ſays he believes, does not live in the way the bleſſing is to be conveyed in, he really refuſes what God hath ſaid he will give: for what is believing, but the heart's acquieſcing, and finding its pleaſure in the bleſſing, and in the aſſurance which the promiſe of a faithful God gives of the actual conveyance of it?

But however ſtrong Abraham's faith was, it was not accounted to him for righteouſneſs,

teouſneſs, until he believed the free abſolute promiſe of God to give him a numerous offspring, who ſhould poſſeſs the land of Canaan; and to give him Iſaac, with whom he was to eſtabliſh his covenant in all points; particularly, that "in "his ſeed all the nations of the earth "ſhould be bleſſed." But this happened many hundred years before the law of Moſes; and even a conſiderable time before circumciſion was inſtituted; and conſequently was prior to his offering up his ſon, when the Apoſtle James ſays "he was "juſtified by his works;" which can mean no more, than that by this trial he ſhowed himſelf to be not only a true, but a ſtrong, believer: for Moſes ſays expreſsly, that he was juſtified before that time; for he ſays, "he believed God, and it was "imputed to him for righteouſneſs."

I cannot help being of opinion, that this text might have been eaſier and better underſtood, had leſs, or even nothing at all, been ſaid about it; in which caſe, it is very likely, moſt people would have been ſatisfied with what lies very plain in the words, that on Abraham's believing the free ſovereign grant God had made him,

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he was treated in all reſpects as a righteous perſon, or, in other words, juſtified from all things which were or could be charged againſt him to infer his condemnation. But as things now ſtand, it is neceſſary we ſhould know what *righteouſneſs* is; what the *imputing for righteouſneſs* means; and what it was which is ſaid to have been imputed to Abraham for that purpoſe.

Righteouſneſs and *godlineſs* are two words, which, when attributed to man, are promiſcuouſly uſed in the ſacred writings to denote the whole of religion, and all the duties belonging to religion. The ſubſtance and matter of both is preciſely the ſame. But *godlineſs* is an abſolute term; whereas *righteouſneſs* is relative, and reſpects judicial procedure in ſome court deſigned for the adminiſtration of juſtice. That which we are moſt concerned in, is the judgement given, or to be given, by the great Sovereign of heaven and earth. Righteouſneſs, or juſtice, is one of his moſt eſſential attributes; and the meaſure or rule by which his judgement proceeds, is his own perfect wiſdom. Hence we find his righteouſneſs applied in a very extenſive

extenſive manner, not only to what we call juſtice, rewarding and puniſhing according to the merits or demerits of the party tried; but even to acts of mercy and grace, and whatever meaſures perfect wiſdom chuſes to follow; for wiſdom and juſtice, where both are perfect, can never take different ſides.

Righteouſneſs, I mean the word, has, I believe, a double import: it has its name from *right*; and denotes, either one who does what is right, or one who has a right ſome privilege or other: and the Apoſtle John has taught us, that theſe two always go together, 1 John iii. 7. It muſt be ſo; for though we read of God's juſtifying the *ungodly* yet he is no where ſaid to juſtify the *unrighteous*. But we are expreſsly enough told of two different kinds of righteouſneſs, viz. the righteouſneſs of God, and one's own righteouſneſs, Rom. iv. 3. We read likewiſe of the righteouſneſs of faith, or which is by faith, and the righteouſneſs of the law, or which is by works of law: and theſe ſtand oppoſed and contrary one to the other. And whatever ſome learned men have thought fit to ſay againſt imputation,

we read oftener than once of "God's im-
" puting righteouſneſs without works."

Much noiſe has been made in all the ages of the world, and never more than in this age, about the *rule of right*; for ſuch a rule it is agreed there muſt be, a ſtandard by which mens works are to be adjuſted. The wiſeſt of the Heathen philoſophers were greatly at a loſs in this reſpect. They agreed pretty unanimouſly, that the mind of the Sovereign of the univerſe was the only juſt rule; but how to get at it, they were quite at a loſs; and indeed could do no more but gueſs: for they knew nothing of the eternal fitneſs of things which our moderns make ſuch a flouriſh about; while, in truth, they neither know, nor can know, any more about it, than their predeceſſors, except what they borrow from the revelation they have in their hands. This renders them abſolutely inexcuſable; for therein we have the righteouſneſs God by faith revealed, with the utmoſt degree of evidence. All are concluded under ſin; and it muſt be the higheſt pitch of inſolence and folly to expect even ſo much as pardon, and much leſs eternal life, in any other way than by a ſovereignly free grant

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and gift from the ſupreme and only proprietor of life. And when he has been graciouſly pleaſed to make ſuch a gift in his Son Jeſus Chriſt, the only right thing a ſinner can do, is, to flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before him; and thus to lay hold on eternal life, in a converſation ſuch as becomes the goſpel of Chriſt, under the direction of his Holy Spirit, which we have the fulleſt aſſurance God will give to thoſe who aſk him; eſpecially when we find all attempts that can be made any other way are no leſs than direct acts of rebellion, and the higheſt inſult that can be offered to God and his bleſſed Son; and the folly is but little inferior to the inſolence, unleſs they could overcome omnipotence, and force eternal life out of the hand of the Almighty.

By this faint ſketch of the order which the great Sovereign of the univerſe, and ſole proprietor of life, has eſtabliſhed, for conveying ſpiritual and eternal life to mankind dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and which has been in force ever ſince ſin entered into the world, any one may be able to form a tolerable judgement of the imputation which Moſes and the Apoſtle

ſpeak of. No body will doubt of its being the ſame with the imputation of righteouſneſs this ſame Apoſtle ſpeaks of in places exactly parallel to this: and that may be eaſily underſtood by what is often ſaid in the Old Teſtament of the imputation of ſin; which we find means the ſame thing as inflicting the deſerved puniſhment; and conſequently, not imputing, is the ſame as not puniſhing, or pardoning. See two places, inſtead of the many that might be mentioned, 2 Sam. xix. 19. and Pſal. xxxii. 1. 2. Imputing righteouſneſs then ſhould be the ſame as treating the perſon, whether righteous or not, in the ſame manner as if he was completely righteous. No body will venture to ſay, that Abraham was ſuch, but that the only claim he had to either the earthly or heavenly Canaan was the free gift of God; and it was a good one, and ſuch as muſt have been ſuſtained by the moſt righteous judge. His caſe was ſingular; but the rule is general. "By grace "we are ſaved, juſtified freely by his grace; "and in Chriſt all that believe are juſti-"fied," &c.

Theſe propoſitions lie ſo fair in the New Teſtament, that no body ever pretended to deny them. But many attempts have been

been made to explain them away into a conſiſtency with certain plans of moral government; which, by ſome means or other, limit the ſovereign proprietor ſo as he may not diſpoſe of his own to whom he will, but only to ſuch as are qualified in ſuch a manner as they, in their wiſdom, think fit they ſhould be. I have no mind here to enter into the diſcuſſion of any of them but that which lies immediately before us. *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs;* whence, they ſay, it is very plain, that if he had not believed, he could not have been ſuſtained a righteous perſon. And ſo far they ſay true: for had not the promiſe been believed, it muſt have been neglected, and no more minded than if it had never been; and the God of truth ſhould have been treated as a common liar.

But do not both Moſes and the apoſtles ſay very expreſsly, that Abraham's believing God was imputed, or reckoned, and ſo allowed, to him for righteouſneſs. They ſay, he believed God; and our tranſlators, and perhaps moſt of the reſt, ſay, it was reckoned or imputed to him for righteouſneſs. Were it allowed, that A-

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braham's perſonal faith, or that act of believing, was that which was reckoned or imputed to him, the queſtion will be put, How came this about, and on what foundation did this reckoning ſtand? for it is certain, that he who is perfect in wiſdom, will do nothing but on the higheſt reaſon; and therefore the wiſeſt patrons of moral government chuſe to ſay, that it was in conſequence of the law of faith, and divine conſtitution, making faith, at loweſt, the condition of the grant and promiſe, or the matter of the believer's righteouſneſs, ariſing on his fulfilment of that law. Had man been ſo well provided in believing powers as to believe theſe ſame promiſes as they came to Abraham, and eſpecially as they come to us now, and had ſuch a law been given with the promiſe of life annexed to obedience to the precepts of it, ſomething might have been ſaid for this plan, faith would have been our very righteouſneſs, and ſhould have given a perfect right to the reward. But beſides that thoſe to whom the promiſes are made, are, every ſoul of them, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins; and not one of them

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can either perceive or believe the things of God, until they are by ſovereign grace quickened and made alive; this was not neither could be, the caſe of Abraham; for the promiſes which Abraham believed, were abſolutely free, without either conditions or limitations. They were God's declarations to him, of what he was poſitively determined to do. And if the Apoſtle did not miſtake the matter, the caſe of Gentile believers was preciſely the ſame with his.

From this conſideration, and another of ſtill greater weight, viz. that this plan puts the whole of a man's righteouſneſs upon an act of his own, (for believing is as much his deed as any other duty), they find themſelves obliged to conclude, that it was not the act of Abraham's faith, or his believing the promiſes then made to him, that was imputed, but the matter of his belief, or what he believed, viz. the free gift of Jeſus, the promiſed ſeed, of pardon and eternal life in him, which may very properly be called his faith; and thus they bring in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, conſiſting in his perfect obedience unto the death, as that which was imputed to Abraham, and ſtill

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is to every believer. And hardly any who claims the name of a Chriſtian, refuſes that this is what they call the meritorious cauſe of the ſinner's juſtification, or being treated as a righteous perſon.

Certain it is, and, I think, will appear ſo to every man who conſiders the ſtructure of Moſes's words, that when he ſays, *it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs*, the whole of the caſe, as he had ſtated it, muſt be taken in, and Abraham's believing is but the iſſue of God's abſolute promiſe to him, and concludes the narrative. The conſequence of the whole was, that this was reckoned to him for righteouſneſs. The promiſe gave him as good a right and title to the bleſſings, as he could have had if they had been earned by the moſt perfect and painful obedience to any law that was, or could be, given. But, after all, perhaps the Apoſtle's word, which we render, *it was imputed*, may be more properly, and certainly more conſiſtently with his principles and views, rendered imperſonally, that is, if the verb is taken in the paſſive ſenſe, as moſt interpreters do. Thus upon the whole of the

the caſe as it ſtood, the poſitive promiſe being given, and he believing the promiſe, there was a reckoning made in Abraham's favour, and a judgement given, that he was a righteous perſon. He had done right in believing this promiſe; and that promiſe gave him a perfect right to the promiſed bleſſing.

But after all, when one conſiders the import and meaning of the word *accounted*, as ſettled by common uſage in that language, it ſeems very likely to me, that though the termination is like a paſſive, it is really one of thoſe verbs which they call neutral; that is, ſuch as denote the ſenſations, and internal actings, of a rational mind, which do not terminate on any external object, but on the mind or perſon himſelf. It will be readily allowed, that it denotes the careful and exact conſidering and weighing every particular, and thereby adjuſting the ſum-total, and making a judgement upon the whole. And it will be no hard matter to find who makes the computation in this caſe; the ſame, to be ſure, who juſtified Abraham, or, which is the ſame thing, found and declared him a righteous perſon; not in

a ſtrict law ſenſe, but what was as good as law, the mind and will of the only Sovereign. Thus we are provided with a nominative to the verb *accounted*, which has a greatly better title to ſtand there. Abraham believed God; and *he*, viz. God, who is perfectly juſt, even when he juſtifies the ungodly who believe in Jeſus, on the whole of the caſe, gave it in his favour, that he was a righteous man, and juſtified him accordingly. And on this view we find the Apoſtle reaſoning, not only here, but in every place where he brings in Abraham's faith, and how matters ſtood with him in point of righteouſneſs and juſtification, Rom. iv. A ſhort queſtion will determine the diſpute: What was it that gave Abraham a right to the bleſſing?

Certain it is, that it was only by the free abſolute promiſe that Abraham had any right to the bleſſing; and his believing could do no more than receive the promiſe, acquieſce in it, and determine him to hold entirely by that tenure. Hence we find the Apoſtle ſtating two different parties, viz. thoſe who are *of faith*, and thoſe who are *of works of law*, and what either of them have to expect from God's hand.

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He begins, verſ. 7. with thoſe *who are of faith.* I need not obſerve again, what is ſo obvious, that faith, or believing, always ſuppoſes a teſtimony or promiſe. Theſe, in the preſent caſe, run into one; for all the facts which God teſtifies, are calculated entirely for illuſtrating and making the promiſe or grant credible, and confirming it ſo as to demand belief. They therefore who are of faith, are with equal propriety ſaid to be of the promiſe: and as that proceeds purely on free ſovereign grace, they are with the ſame propriety ſaid to be of grace, in oppoſition to works of every kind: I ſay, in oppoſition to works; for thus we find the Apoſtle ſtates it, Rom. xi. 6.; the one holds entirely by grace, and the other by works.

The firſt thing he obſerves concerning thoſe who are *of faith* is, that they are the *children of Abraham.* It is ſomewhat doubtful, whether the Apoſtle meant to ſay, that the Galatians knew this, or that he deſigned now to notify it to them, as the verb may be either in the preſent of the indicative or of the imperative mood, as they are commonly diſtinguiſhed; and it is difficult to ſay which of them is moſt

probable; nor is it of any moment, as both equally anſwer his purpoſe.

It is of more moment, to be ſure of what the Apoſtle means by their being *the children of Abraham:* and the way he introduces it may contribute ſomething toward it: *Know, therefore.* Thus it ſtands as an inference from what he had been juſt ſaying. Our Lord gives ſome light to it in what he ſays to the Jews, John viii. 39. "If Abraham were your father, ye would "do the works of Abraham." It appears to have been an eſtabliſhed rule, that thoſe who formed themſelves on any eminent perſon, and lived as he did, ſhould be called his children, becauſe they imitated and copied after him, as children do their fathers. And thus we find this ſame Apoſtle ſtates it, Rom. iv. 11.—17. that Abraham was, to all intents and purpoſes, as much the father of all them that believe, as of his natural deſcendents; and that thoſe who walk in his ſteps, and the faith on which he was found righteous, that juſtified, are every way as much his ſeed, to whom the promiſe of the bleſſing was made. We will find our Apoſtle, in the cloſe of this chapter, putting this affair

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of the Gentiles being Abraham's ſeed on its proper bottom; to which we refer what might have been ſaid further on this ſubject. Our buſineſs is, to follow the Apoſtle, and take things as he has laid them to our hand, as he beſt knew how to proſecute the purpoſe he had in view.

Among the many exceptions the Jewiſh zealots made againſt the Apoſtle's doctrine, the moſt plauſible was the pretended novelty of it. They had been long accuſtomed to the law of Moſes: it was given to their nation with very great ſolemnity; and they were quite in the right to regard it as the law of God. Had they kept it in the place the law-giver put it, they had been led thereby directly to Chriſt. But they had perverted it into a law, ſuch as God never gave to mankind; a law which ſhould give eternal life to thoſe who obeyed, and did the things commanded there. But this was their very groſs miſtake; and he demonſtrates from their own record, that his doctrine was ſo far from being new, that it was at leaſt four hundred and thirty years older than their law; nay, that the very thing which they were ſo much enraged at, the juſtifying the Heathen

then nations by the faith of Chriſt, was revealed to, and exemplified in, their father Abraham; and that on this very view, *the ſcripture, foreſeeing that God would juſtify the Heathen through faith*, did ſo.

No body will blame the Apoſtle's attributing to the ſcriptures what none but an intelligent being, and one too whoſe underſtanding was perfect, could do. His buſineſs was, to convict the gainſayers by their own record; and if he could ſhew, that the ſame goſpel was delivered to Abraham, and that he was juſtified or ſuſtained as one who had righteouſneſs on this proſpect, it muſt have appeared with great evidence, that this was the way which the great Author of the record had eſtabliſhed. And here it will be proper to obſerve, that though Abraham ſtands there as the moſt eminent, and whoſe hiſtory is moſt particularly recorded; yet he was not the firſt to whom the revelation was made, and who were, as the Apoſtle ſays of Noah, made *heirs of the righteouſneſs which is by faith*. So far from it, that from Adam, who firſt received the promiſe, down to Moſes, there was no other way of attaining

taining a right to the bleſſing of pardon and life, and of courſe no other righteouſneſs, but by believing the free gift, and regulating their conduct in a ſuitableneſs to it; that is, in all the duties of gratitude and love to their gracious Creator and Redeemer.

That the nations of the Gentiles, that is, all the world, excepting only the comparatively ſmall nation of the Jews, were to have a right given them to eternal life, in the ſame manner Abraham had, he proves from their own record, viz. that in Abraham, that is, as the record explains it, *in his ſeed all the nations of the earth ſhould be bleſſed.* The original promiſe of the ſeed of the woman, repeated and renewed as it was to Noah, had lain as it were in common among his poſterity, until it was fixed in the family of Abraham, and limited to Iſaac and his deſcendents. One would not have thought, that it could ever have entered any Chriſtian's head, that this bleſſing could mean any thing elſe but (what only deſerves the name of a bleſſing) that eternal life, conveyed by and in Jeſus Chriſt, the promiſed ſeed. But it has been explained away into

into no bleſſing at all by a very learned commentator. He had read of Jacob's bleſſing his grandſons, and that he ſaid, *In thee ſhall Iſrael bleſs, &c.* Gen. xlviii. 20. But he ſhould have obſerved, that this was not the bleſſing, but the conſequence of it; and at moſt was but an expreſſion of mens faint wiſhes, and nothing at all to the bleſſing of God, ſecured to Abraham through faith in the promiſed ſeed, and to all who ſhould be found in the ſame way of believing, as the Apoſtle infers, verſ. 9. *So then they that are of faith, are bleſſed with faithful Abraham.*

Bleſſing is a very common word in every one's mouth, but I am afraid few have a diſtinct notion of the import of it. Men are ſaid to bleſs God; they bleſs one another; and the Apoſtle reckons it out of doubt, that the leſs is bleſſed of the greater: And God is ſaid to bleſs men. When men, parents for inſtance, bleſs their children, in ordinary caſes, they can do no more than wiſh happineſs to them, or pray God to bleſs them; while they have but very confuſed notions of that bleſſedneſs they wiſh or pray for, and their bleſſing is little more than an expreſſion of their love and tender affection, that they would make

make them quite happy, if it was in their power, and they knew how to effect it. Mens bleſſing God can go no further than an expreſſion of the delight and pleaſure which the fullneſs and all-ſufficiency of God gives them. But God's bleſſing man is another thing in all reſpects, excepting only the riſe and ſpring from whence his bleſſing proceeds; that favour and loving-kindneſs of God who is love, and of which the moſt ſincere and tender affection found among men is but a faint ſhadow. His bleſſing never ſtops in words or wiſhes. When he bleſſed Abraham, he made him as bleſſed and as happy as man can be in this preſent world. Our kind creator has not left us to form our notions of ſuch an important matter on what we affect moſt, and our hearts are moſt ſet upon. Beſides the many inſtructions given by our bleſſed Lord and his apoſtles, "to ſeek firſt the "kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs," without which there can be no bleſſedneſs, he has put the caſe of Abraham on record. He was made a great man in the world's account, and had great riches given him. But theſe were only acceſſories. The bleſſing lay in the promiſed ſeed; and upon

the belief of this he was reckoned and treated as a righteous perſon; and in that inheritance to which he had a right given him by the promiſe, his bleſſedneſs lay. He looked for a better country, and God was not aſhamed to be called his God, and the God of his fellow-believers, becauſe he had prepared for them a city, Heb. xi. 14. 15. 16. And they who are of faith, and believe God as he did, muſt of courſe be bleſſed with him.

Such was the caſe of Abraham, and ſuch is the bleſſing of all his genuine children who walk in his ſteps, as the Galatians did when they were attacked by the Judaizing teachers, who would needs have them to ſubmit to their law. And what were they to gain by it? The Apoſtle ſets the folly of it in a very ſtrong light, verſ. 10. *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curſe.* But might they not ſay, "It is written, that the man that doth them, "ſhall live in them." It is ſo: and could there be a man found, who continueth in all things written in the law to do them, he might have ſomething to ſay; but ſuch a man never was, and, we may be very

very ſure, never will be found, among the mere children of Adam; "for no man li-"veth, and ſinneth not;" and God has ſhut up all under ſin, that he might have mercy on all; ſo that none could ever be ſaved, but by free ſovereign mercy and grace: for the law is expreſs, *Curſed is every one who continueth not in all things writen in the book of the law, to do them.*

But might not one ſay of the whole nation of the Jews in this view, as the diſciples ſaid to their maſter in another caſe, "Who then could be ſaved?" for they were all under the law as given by Moſes. There was even in that law a proviſion made for the forgiveneſs of ſin, ſo far as it went. Thus we find it often repeated, that on their offering a ſacrifice after the divine appointment, their ſin ſhould be forgiven them. Whence, it is likely, the ignorant Jews, who did not ſee into the ſpirit of their law, might flatter themſelves with the proſpect of eternal life by the law. But what was promiſed there was mere forgiveneſs of the ſins for which they had offered the ſacrifice: and that could be no further than putting them in the ſame caſe they were in, and reſtoring

them to the poſſeſſion of the ſame life they had before they tranſgreſſed, with the privileges belonging to it; but did not, and could not, remove the original curſe by which they, and all mankind, were bound under death; from which they could not be relieved, but by raiſing them from the dead, and the grant of a new life by the promiſed ſeed, as it was made to their father Abraham, and which was continued down through all the times of the law; and in virtue of which the believers among them lived. Hence it is that we find the Apoſtle making a diſtinction between ſimply being *under the law*, as all the natural Jews were, and being *of the works of the law*; that is, living or attempting to live by fulfilling the commands and precepts of it; whereas their buſineſs was, and indeed they were equally bound, by their law, to take in the promiſe, and to live by the faith and belief of the free gift made there.

That this was really the caſe, and that thoſe of the Iſraelitiſh or Jewiſh nation who had the proſpect, and well-grounded hopes of eternal life, had it not at all by any works of law, he ſays, verſ. 11.

is *evident*, by what he lays down as a fundamental principle, and which he had a good right to ſuppoſe indiſputable, becauſe it ſtood on record in thoſe writings which they received as the oracles of the living God, by his prophet Habakkuk, ii. 4.

Our tranſlators, and many before them, render both the prophet and Apoſtle's words, *The juſt ſhall live by faith.* The propoſition carries in it a great truth, that the juſt or righteous man lives by faith; ſo the Apoſtle had ſaid, the life which he then lived in the fleſh, was by the faith of the Son of God. But as the natural import of it ſuppoſes the man to be already righteous or juſt who thus lives, without ſaying either how he came to be ſo, or wherein his righteouſneſs lies, an unwary reader may be led into a very dangerous miſtake, viz. that one muſt be a juſt and a righteous man before he preſumes to live by faith; and which indeed there is no way of guarding effectually againſt it, but by making the expreſſion equivalent to this, Whatever righteouſneſs a man may be, or imagine himſelf to be, poſſeſſed of, the only way he can live, *i. e.* have eternal life, is *by faith.*

But

But even this leaves a point doubtful, which, we may be very ſure, the Apoſtle never meant to do; viz. that there might be ſome other way of one's being righteous than by faith, or believing God as Abraham did. The plain literal ſenſe of the words, as they ſtand, both in the prophet and in the Apoſtle, is, that *he who is righteous by faith, ſhall live.* This rendering, and this only, anſwers the Apoſtle's argument. He propoſes to prove, that no man can be juſtified by the law; and proves this by the divine oracle, which allowed or ſuſtained the righteouſneſs which came by faith, or believing, as that only which did or could give a ſinner any title or right to life; and accordingly reckons his point fully proved, by aſſerting, verſ. 12. what could not be denied, that *the law is not of faith*, &c. I ſuppoſe it out of diſpute, that juſtifying in the ſight of God, and ſuſtaining a perſon righteous, are, in all reſpects, the ſame thing, unleſs a diſtinction is made, by ſuppoſing *juſtifying* to be the ſentence given by the ſovereign judge, and *righteouſneſs* the foundation on which the ſentence ſtands, which comes

comes to the ſame point. God gives a perfect right to life, by his promiſe and grant in Chriſt Jeſus; the believer truſts the faithful promiſer, on the proofs he has given of his fixed and unalterable purpoſe of making it good, and his faith and hope are fixed on God. Thus he receives and reſts on the promiſe, and ſurely the promiſer muſt ſuſtain the plea; and the greateſt ſinner that ever was on earth may, and ought, to draw near to a throne of grace, with boldneſs and confidence; or, as the ſame Apoſtle expreſſes it, "with "full aſſurance of faith. The leaſt doubt is an affront to the promiſer, and his bleſſed Son, who has undertaken to make it good.

CHAP. iii. 13.——18.

13. *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us: for it is written, Curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree:* 14. *That the bleſſing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jeſus Chriſt; that we might receive the promiſe of the Spirit through faith.* 15. *Brethren, I ſpeak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man diſanulleth, or addeth thereto.* 16. *Now to Abraham and his ſeed were the promiſes made. He ſaith not, And to ſeeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy ſeed, which is*

is Chriſt. 17. And this I ſay, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Chriſt, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot diſannul, that it ſhould make the promiſe of none effect. 18. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promiſe: but God gave it to Abraham by promiſe.

I Had occaſion to obſerve, from the account the Apoſtle gives of Abraham, and thoſe who were his children by faith, that from the firſt promiſe made upon the entrance of ſin, and the revelation of the conſtitution of grace, there was eſtabliſhed one uniform order, in which, and in which only, any of the ſinners of mankind could be ſuſtained as righteous; or, which is the ſame thing, have a right to eternal life, in the righteous judgement of God. But by what he had ſaid of the curſe, under which the law bound all the tranſgreſſors of it in any the leaſt point, it might have been deemed impoſſible that any one could be ſaved. The import of the curſe was death; and that puts an end to life: thence it muſt be concluded, as we find the appointment runs, that all men muſt die. And in this ſentence the Gentiles, though they had

no

no positive law inferring it, were as deeply concerned as the Jews. So that to every created understanding, the total destruction of the human race must have appeared absolutely inevitable.

But what is impossible with man, and appears so to every creature, is quite easy with God. The interposal of the promised seed solves all difficulties; and the Apostle gives it in one short sentence, 1 Cor. xv. 21. "As by man came death, by man "came also the resurrection of the dead;" the same which he here sets before us, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law.* And never did the weakness and perverseness of human wisdom appear in a stronger light, than in the almost numberless questions and controversies that have been raised on this important subject, on which all the hopes of mankind, for time and eternity, must be founded. We are indeed directed "to contend "earnestly for the faith once delivered to "the saints;" but we must be sure first, that what we contend for is this same faith, and not our own interpolations and additions to it. The faith in this grand article is so fully, and so plainly, deliver-

ed in the record we have of it, that no ſober Chriſtian needs to give himſelf any trouble about what learned men have ſaid upon it; which one may ſay with confidence has contributed greatly more to involve and darken, than to give any further light into the truth as it is in Jeſus.

The Apoſtle informs us here, that Chriſt has redeemed us from the curſe of the law; and alſo tells us how he did it, viz. by *being made a curſe for us*; or, literally, he bought us up out of, or from under, the curſe of the law. The original curſe ſtruck at all the life which Adam had; and eſpecially that which he conveys to us. That doom is fixed and irreverſible; and we find it ſo in fact. When Chriſt then is ſaid to redeem, or buy up, his people from under the curſe of the law, it cannot be underſtood to mean, that he deſigned by it, either to ſave them from dying, or to reſtore them to that paradiſiacal life which the curſe deſtroyed; but that he delivers them out of that ſtate of death which the curſe had brought them into; and which is done, by putting them in poſſeſſion of an incomparably higher and better life, conveyed by the free

free ſovereign gift and grant of the only proprietor of it.

" But it became him, by whom, and " for whom, all things are, in bringing ma- " ny ſons unto glory, to make the Captain " of their ſalvation, their Redeemer, per- " fect through ſufferings." Sin muſt be condemned and deſtroyed; and that cannot be done but by the deſtruction of the ſinner. Death does that effectually. But it was neceſſary, that either the ſinner ſhould be held under death, or that ſin ſhould be condemned in a more ſolemn manner. This was ſhadowed firſt in the Old-Teſtament ſacrifices, and the grant of forgiveneſs annexed to them. But when the ever-bleſſed Son of God condeſcended to take upon himſelf the character of a prieſt-interceſſor, and offered himſelf a ſacrifice for ſin, laid down his life, gave it a ranſom for the lives and ſouls of ſinners, or, to ſay all in one word, was made a curſe for them, it became a juſt and a righteous thing with God to forgive the ſinner, and to raiſe him up to everlaſting life. The grant was cleared of the burden that lay upon it, and carries a full and perfect

right to life to every man who will conſent to hold it by this new tenure.

Theſe are plain things; and will yet be more ſo, if we carry along what our Lord told his diſciples, of the Father appointing or making a grant of the kingdom to him; and compare what he ſays to his Father, John xvii. of his finiſhing the work which was given him to do, with the account the Apoſtle John gives of the teſtimony of God concerning his Son, 1 John v. 11. But theſe we do not ſtand on here: what I mention them for is, to ſettle the grand point, "That all things "are of God," and take their riſe in his eternal counſels, and unchangeable purpoſes. And if we will take our Lord's word for it, and the joint teſtimony of all his apoſtles, the whole proceeded from, and was deſigned to prove and commend the aſtoniſhing love of God, and his ever-bleſſed Son, his perfect image in all reſpects, and eſpecially that of his love; ſuch love as proves him to be eſſential love: "God ſo loved the world," John iii. 16.; "God commendeth his love to us," Rom. v. 8.; "Herein is love," 1 John iv. 10. And the proof of all is no other than this,

viz.

viz. God's ſending his Son to be the Saviour of the world, and giving him up to the death a ſacrifice, and ranſom, or price of redemption, for ſinners, as priſoners, ſlaves, and captives, are redeemed: yea, our Lord carries it ſo far as to ſay, that the Father loves him for this very reaſon, that he laid down his life. I need not ſtand to obſerve how he is ſaid to have been "de-"livered by the determinate counſel of "God, and that the cup that was put into "his hand was given him by his Father," &c.

The ſtrongeſt expreſſion of all is that in the text, that *he redeemed*, or bought up his people, *from under the curſe of the law, by being made a curſe for them*; which has occaſioned a number of ſpeculations from the different apprehenſions men have formed to themſelves of the nature of the curſe, and ſome, I might ſay many of them, not very honourable, either to the Father or the Son. It appears paſt controverſy, that the Redeemer put himſelf in the very place where the redeemed ſtood, and took upon him that very curſe which they were bound under; that we are ſure was death, the deſtruction of the life they had

had from Adam; and that was what the Redeemer, the true head of mankind in relation to the ſpiritual and eternal world, did, in their name and behalf, reſign and give up on the croſs. The *curſe* is a relative term, founded in the ſanction of the law: but it does not follow, that the effect of it is any evidence, either of wrath or vengeance, but on ſin, which he has given the fulleſt aſſurance he will abſolutely deſtroy out of his world: and ſo far from being an evidence of wrath to the perſon of the ſinner, who will enter into the death of Chriſt, and homologate for himſelf what he did in their name, that it is the higheſt evidence that can be imagined of the moſt perfect love and kindneſs. The man Jeſus was indeed left to himſelf on that occaſion; and no wonder, that he who enjoyed all the pleaſures a human life is capable of receiving, ſhould be troubled to a great degree on the proſpect of what he was to ſuffer. But he knew well, that however he was left for a ſeaſon to fight it out, and avenge the murder of his brethren on the murderer, he knew for certain, that his heavenly Father loved him on that very account, and for what he had thus left

him

him to do. By his office, indeed, the ſins of all who were to have the benefit of his ſacrifice were laid upon him; but no otherwiſe than the Old-Teſtament ſins were laid on the prieſt who offered, viz. that he was bound to put them away in the manner which God had appointed. So that there is not the leaſt colour for the many harſh and preſumptuous things which have been boldly thrown out againſt God, and the Son of his love, in whom he was always well pleaſed, and never better than when he cried out on the croſs, "My "God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken "me?"

By theſe ſhort hints, if purſued with any tolerable attention, it will eaſily appear, how the ever-bleſſed Son of God, being made a curſe, and ſuffering, the juſt for the unjuſt, came to be the ranſom or price by which they are bought out from under the curſe of the law. The curſe of the law is the curſe of God; and there is no eſcaping from under it, but by his order and releaſe. Thus we have on record a conſtitution of pure grace, but which cannot ſubſiſt but in Chriſt; an order or decree in which Father, Son, and Spirit, concur,

concur, whereby the eternal Word, uniting with man in the perſon of Jeſus, was conſtituted a prieſt-interceſſor to take upon him the ſins of his people, and to put them away by the ſacrifice of himſelf; and if we believe the Pſalmiſt, and the Apoſtle after him, Heb. vii. 21. the grant of prieſthood, with all the privileges belonging to it, and among others conveying the bleſſing mentioned Acts iii. 26. was confirmed by a very ſolemn oath. This tranſaction has of late had the title given it of the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son. I have nothing to ſay againſt it but the difficulty of conceiving a covenant or mutual agreement on terms and conditions between the Father and Son, who are one: and indeed I cannot help looking upon it as an indecency to make them tranſact, propoſe, and agree, as men do when they are driving a bargain. Our Lord's view of a grant or deed of conveyance appears to be better warranted, and more becoming the majeſty of the great and ſole proprietor of life and bleſſedneſs; compare John v. 26. "As the Father hath "life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the "Son to have life in himſelf," with what

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is written, John v. 21. "As the Father rai-
"seth up the dead, and quickeneth whom
"he will, so also does the Son;" which connects with what the Apostle John says of God's testimony or record, viz. that he has made a grant, or deed of gift, of eternal life in favour of mankind, and that this life is in his Son. Whence it follows of course, "that he who hath the Son, hath
"life; and he who hath not the Son, hath
"not life."

The proof the Apostle brings of Christ being made a curse, viz. his dying upon a cross, has been thought by some too weak to sustain such a weight as he lays upon it. It is no more, say they, but an arbitrary constitution, which has nothing in the nature of the thing to support it, as there is nothing in this kind of death more than another, which can bring a curse on him who suffers it. It is indeed an arbitrary constitution; but it was made by him who has an undoubted right to make what constitution he pleases, and is no more accountable for making this, than for his making what we call nature to be what it is. God said, and has left it on record, *Cursed is every one that hangeth on*

a tree; and when Jeſus was found in that ſituation, there can be no fuller evidence of his having been made a curſe.

The Apoſtle ſays, he was made a curſe *for us*; that is, for the Apoſtle himſelf, and the believing Galatians he was writing to: and as there was nothing either in him or them to diſtinguiſh them from the reſt of mankind but their faith, or, as the Apoſtle Peter defines it, *believing in God through Chriſt*, the propoſition holds true of all believers, of whatſoever age or nation; and all have the ſame reaſon to ſay, he hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.

It merits our attention, how the Apoſtle connects the bleſſing of Abraham coming upon the Gentiles, with Chriſt's bearing the curſe, verſ. 14. The loweſt conſtruction his words, as they ſtand, can bear, carries in it this great fundamental truth, That it is only in and through the croſs of Chriſt, and the great ſacrifice he made of himſelf there, that any of Adam's race can receive any bleſſing from the hand of God; but at the ſame time that it cuts off all other dependencies, we are well aſſured, that there is nothing loſt by it:

it: for the very design of his taking the curse upon himself was, *that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles.*

The blessing of Abraham may be understood, either of Abraham's personal blessing, or of that which all nations were to have by his seed. It comes all to the same thing. In either way, the blessing is the same, and conveyed in the same manner. It was the gift of righteousness which he had when he believed God, and that is but another word for the gift of eternal life; unless we chuse to say, that the promise conveyed the right, and Abraham, by believing, received the blessing, and appropriated it to himself, as he had great good reason to value it above all his other possessions. But as that promise was not confined to himself only, but extended to all nations; all to whom the promise comes have as good reason to believe it, and to appropriate the blessing to themselves, as he had. They who thus believe, in doing so must have the same right, and of course the same reason, to reckon it their own, and to improve it to all the ends and purposes it is designed to answer; that is, all that is necessary for the support of the spiritual

life, and carrying it on to its full perfection, in the glory, honour, and immortality of the world to come. The bleſſing was promiſed *in the ſeed*; that *ſeed* was now come in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt: in him therefore the bleſſing muſt be lodged, as he has the fullneſs of life, all that ever God deſigned for mankind, in his hand, and that by the beſt right that can be; in him therefore we may aſſure ourſelves of finding it.

There is ſomething of the ſame ambiguity in the connection and dependence of receiving the promiſe of the Spirit, with or upon what he had ſaid of the bleſſing of Abraham. For whether it be conceived as a further and more particular account of the bleſſing, or as the immediate conſequence and effect of the bleſſing, it is, upon the matter, the ſame thing to the believer. The gift of the Spirit is an eſſential part of the bleſſing, and the earneſt and ſecurity for the whole. There the promiſed life begins; and by the ſame Spirit, they who receive this unſpeakable gift, are kept by the mighty power of God, through faith, unto perfect and complete ſalvation.

I need not ſtand to obſerve, what is ſo obvious, that *receiving the promiſe of the Spirit*, is the ſame thing as receiving the Spirit which was promiſed. Thus Abraham, and all the patriarchs who lived by the faith of the promiſes, Heb. xi. are ſaid to have died in faith, not having received the promiſes, becauſe they did not live to ſee them fulfilled. The Apoſtle had obſerved but a little before, that the Galatians had received the Spirit; and I need not repeat what I had occaſion to obſerve there of the nature of this fundamental bleſſing; only, as there is no mention of it in Abraham's hiſtory, it may be doubted how the Apoſtle brings it in here as the promiſed Spirit. I obſerved before, that as this is an eſſential part of Abraham's bleſſing, and was actually come upon the Gentile Galatians in fulfilment of the promiſe made to him, the mention of it is brought in with great propriety. But as he had ſaid, that the bleſſing came upon the Gentiles in Chriſt, it was very proper to bring in the promiſe of the Spirit, which was expreſsly limited to the times of the Meſſiah, or the Chriſt the anointed's appearance, and was indeed the grand cha-

racteriſtic

racteriſtic of theſe times; by which it was proved beyond all reaſonable doubt, that Jeſus was indeed he. And as they had in Chriſt received the bleſſing of Abraham in the ſame manner he did, by pure faith, without any works of law whatſoever, only believing the teſtimony of God concerning his Son, it muſt have been the moſt abſurd thing that can well be imagined, to go to a law they never had any concern with, and which could do nothing to thoſe who were under it, but bind them under the curſe; which Chriſt had taken upon himſelf, and bought out their liberty at a very coſtly price, even his own moſt precious blood.

Thus far the Apoſtle had inſiſted on the example of Abraham, the father of believers, and a pattern of righteouſneſs; how he came by, and how he received the promiſe and grant which conveyed the bleſſing. But as it was a point of great importance, and which it was abſolutely neceſſary that the hearts of Chriſtians ſhould be firmly eſtabliſhed in; he goes on to prove, that this was the only way by which any ſinner could come by either a right to the bleſſing, or the poſſeſſion of it, even when the

law

law of Moſes was in its utmoſt ſtrength and vigour. He begins with Abraham; not as if he was the firſt heir of the righteouſneſs which is by faith, but as before his time there was no law given which could miſlead men from their dependence on the free promiſe, and the ſeed of the woman who was to bruiſe the ſerpent's head, which the Apoſtle John explains well, by "deſtroying the works of the devil," 1 John iii. 8.; that is, ſin and death; and the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, by "deſtroying himſelf and his work together."

He begins, verſ. 15. by laying down a caſe well known among men, and as univerſally acknowledged, viz. that even *a man's covenant*, as our tranſlators render the Apoſtle's word, or *teſtament*, as it is in the margin, *if it be once confirmed, no man taketh upon him to diſannul, or add thereto.* This, ſurely, will hold with far greater ſtrength againſt any kind of change in a divine conſtitution, whatever name may be given to the promiſe, ſuch as was made to Abraham, and which the Apoſtle has here under his conſideration; and which he accordingly applies, to prove, that the law could not in the leaſt derogate from or make any alteration in it. But though the

the reaſoning in general is allowed to be plain and concluſive, yet there have been very warm diſputes about the word he uſes, whether *covenant* or *teſtament* be the right tranſlation; and where there can be no difference about that, ſtill the meaning of the word affords another ſubject of diſpute.

The main diſpute on the firſt head is about the rendering of the word διαθήκη, whether it ſignifies a *covenant*, or *teſtament*; very different things indeed, and it muſt be of no ſmall moment to know certainly which of them he intended. It is agreed on all hands, that there is another word, συνθήκη, which, in the original language, is always uſed to ſignify a covenant or mutual agreement, and which we never find uſed by the ſacred writers to expreſs what they mean by this; which muſt be allowed to be at leaſt a ſtrong preſumption, that they deſigned ſomething by this word different from what all the world mean by a covenant. But the patrons of moral government being well aware, that if the bleſſing, or eternal life, is conveyed any way but by law or covenant, their plan cannot ſtand; for all the

the right we can have will appear owing to free ſovereign grace, and the mere good pleaſure of the granter. They therefore inſiſt ſtiffly, that where-ever this word is uſed in the New Teſtament, it muſt mean a *covenant*, not ſo much as excepting Heb. ix. 16. But the uſage of the language will not ſupport them; as the word is never uſed in their ſenſe, unleſs perhaps by ſome comical writer who wanted to play with words. But they find in what they call the Helleniſtic Greek, what they think puts the matter out of doubt: for the Seventy, as they are commonly called, always tranſlate the Hebrew BERITH, not by συνθήκη, but διαθήκη, and the New-Teſtament writers do the ſame; and that BERITH is the Hebrew word for a covenant, they think, appears evidently from the many inſtances wherein it is uſed in this ſenſe.

That the two words CARAT BERITH are always uſed to expreſs that tranſaction which we call making a covenant, is true. But that BERITH, ſtanding by itſelf, ſignifies a covenant, and particularly where God's BERITH is ſpoken of, will not be eaſily proved, unleſs we could ſay, they *cut* a covenant. The Greeks had not got the

Hebrew phraſe among them, as the Latins ſome how had; and therefore were forced to ſay, as we do, making or entering into a Συνθήκη. And were that phraſe of cutting off BERITH well underſtood, it would lead us into a very juſt and proper view of all theſe tranſactions, which we call making a covenant; and the reaſon too why a ſacrifice was either actually offered, or ſuppoſed, when men entered into mutual engagements with one another. I only obſerve, that the Son of God himſelf is, oftener than once, called by this name, and promiſed to the Gentiles as a BERITH for them. But the diſcuſſion would, I cannot ſay carry us out of our way, but would need more room than I can allow it here.

But there are others, nothing inferior to theſe learned men, who look upon this whole plan of moral government, and even this loweſt form of it, viz. a covenant or mutual agreement, on terms and conditions of whatever kind, or however performed by men, as utterly inconſiſtent with the ſyſtem of grace ſet forth in the divine record; where God is repreſented governing mankind, as their creator, and thence

their

their abſolute proprietor and ſovereign. And as none of them can ever requite him for the benefits they have received, none of them, not the moſt innocent and perfect of them, can have any pretenſions to expect any further benefit, unleſs he ſhall be pleaſed to give them a promiſe to found on. But a world of ſinners, ſuch as all mankind are, it is glaringly evident, are ſo far from having any ground to entertain ſuch hopes, that they have all the reaſon in the world againſt it; ſo that nothing but an abſolutely free and ſovereign grant of grace can give them ſo much as any hope of pardon; and what mad preſumption would it have been, to flatter themſelves with the hopes of a reſurrection, and eternal life too, after their bodies are mouldered down into their original duſt?

Thus the caſe appears evidently to ſtand in the eye of common ſenſe, and untaught or unbiaſſed reaſon. But when ſuch a grant is made, and the promiſe, and even the oath, of the God of truth, interpoſed, and all things laid ready as they are in Jeſus Chriſt; the ſame common ſenſe will ſay, that it is the moſt monſtrous thing a reaſonable creature can be

guilty of, not to believe him: and that was all that Abraham did, and all that either Jew or Gentile can do, for obtaining the full advantage of the grant and promiſe; for he who promiſed is faithful, and his power almighty.

On this foundation they find themſelves forced to think, that the New-Teſtament writers made choice of this word for better and higher reaſons, than that the Greek tranſlators had expreſſed by it what they took to be the meaning of the Hebrew phraſe. They themſelves knew, that it was the only word in the Greek tongue that could expreſs it any thing near its very emphatic import. They knew that Jeſus Chriſt was the true BERITH; and cutting him off, when he was made a curſe for his people, was the true and only foundation on which the promiſe of the bleſſing ſtands. They knew, that the proper meaning of the word they choſe was, a grant, or, as we ſay, an inſtrument by which one makes a conveyance of his goods and property by teſtament or otherwiſe: and they had their great Maſter's authority for thus expreſſing the conveyance he makes of the kingdom he

received

received from the Father to his diſciples and followers. We may add, what they certainly alſo knew, that this term is never uſed but to expreſs the deed of one ſingle perſon, and which is firm and valid without the concurrence of any other. On all which conſiderations, it is very evident the Apoſtle could not be guilty of ſuch an abuſe of words, as to chuſe this, if he meant to have us believe he was ſpeaking of what we call a *covenant* between God and any of mankind.

But the Apoſtle himſelf puts it out of doubt by the tranſaction to which he applies it, viz. the caſe of Abraham, verſ. 16.; and which he advances as God's διαθήκη, in oppoſition to man's in the foregoing verſe. He mentions no law given to him, by the fulfilment of which he might acquire a right to the bleſſing, nor any conditional grant which ſhould ſuſpend his right until the terms were performed; but that the promiſe was ſpoken literally, or ſaid to Abraham and his ſeed. And he ſays no more than Moſes had taught him: for he takes the facts exactly as he found them laid in his hiſtory. The promiſe is made free and abſolute, before he ſo much as believed:

believed: and how could he believe, until he knew what he had to believe, and what reaſon he had to do ſo? But this is not only his caſe; but in all thoſe where God is ſaid to make a covenant, (excepting only that at Sinai, for which there is an obvious reaſon), particularly the only two other caſes parallel to this, viz. his covenant, as we render it, with Noah and David, we will find nothing but promiſes, or poſitive declarations, of what God was firmly and unalterably determined to do. Theſe were indeed properly διαθηκαι; but very improperly, or rather in no ſenſe at all, can they be what in our language we call covenants. One needs no more to be fully aſſured of this, but to read theſe tranſactions as they ſtand on record, without the commentaries which men have made on them. But it muſt be a very plain text indeed, which a ſkilful critic, who has a turn to ſerve, cannot ſkrew into a conſiſtency with his own ſentiments, at leaſt to ſeem to ſay nothing againſt them.

It is but a poor criticiſm which has been attempted to throw a ſlur on the Apoſtle's reaſoning, or, if we may call it, his critical remark on the promiſe made to Abraham

braham and his ſeed, that he does not ſay *ſeeds*, as of many, but *his ſeed*, pointing to one, viz. That ſeed is a collective, and naturally ſignifies plurally. Perhaps, had they underſtood the language Moſes wrote in as well as Paul did, they would have found the remark fit for nothing, but to be laughed at. The word rendered *ſeed* may be plural as well as *child*; nor would it be improper, even in our language, to ſpeak of the ſeveral ſeeds he had by Sarah, by Hagar, and by Keturah.

A plain man reading the Apoſtle's words, when he tells us, that this one ſeed, to whom the promiſe was made, is Chriſt, would very naturally think it was the ſame Chriſt who had redeemed his people from the curſe of the law, and in whom the bleſſing of Abraham came upon the Gentiles; and would find no difficulty in believing, that to him the promiſe of the bleſſing was originally and primarily made, and comes only in and through him to thoſe who believe. He would readily be further confirmed in this when he found, that it is in him, and in him alone, that all nations were to be bleſſed.

And

And what the Apoſtle ſays, verſ. 17. that this ſame promiſe, which he calls a διαθήκη, very properly a grant, or deed of conveyance, was confirmed of God in, or rather to Chriſt, and reſts the unalterableneſs of it on this, like that of the Pſalmiſt, *God has ſpoken,—he will not lie unto David.* And what the Apoſtle adds in the cloſe of the chapter, that it is only by their intereſt in, and relation to Chriſt, that they become truly Abraham's ſeed, and heirs of the promiſe, might put him out of all doubt of his having hit the Apoſtle's intention.

But there is nothing of ingenuity or learning in this conſtruction, and there is nothing of a covenant between God and mankind; and if Chriſt perſonal, as he ſuffered and died, is the ſeed to whom the Apoſtle ſays the promiſe is made, none but he can have any benefit by it. But as the church of Chriſt is frequently called his body, and every particular Chriſtian a member of him the head; on which account the church, in this view, the whole body of believers united as they are with him, is called expreſsly Chriſt, 1 Cor. xii. 12.

12. On this diſtinction between Chriſt perſonal and Chriſt myſtical, a name they have given the whole body of Chriſtians united under him their head, many learned men conclude poſitively, that it is in this laſt ſenſe, and not the other common one, that the Apoſtle ſays, that one ſeed was Chriſt. And thus they very ingeniouſly make him ſay, that though Abraham had many children, the promiſe was only to his ſpiritual ſeed, ſuch as are his children by faith: and of theſe there are not two ſeeds, one by the law, and another by the goſpel; but, as he ſays, verſ. 28. *they are all one in Chriſt:* which they think beſt anſwers his views in this place.

But beſides what was already obſerved of the plain conſtruction of the Apoſtle's words as they ſtand, he appears to have had another view, of at leaſt as great moment, and which is either loſt or greatly obſcured in this conſtruction; namely, that in the whole affair of redemption, from the beginning to the completement of it, Chriſt ſo ſtands between God and the body of Chriſtians in the quality of mediator, or great prieſt-interceſſor, that they can have no dealings with God, nor God

with them, and particularly that they can receive no bleſſing from God, but through his hands. By him he made the worlds in the firſt creation, and the government of it is upon his ſhoulders; all power in heaven and earth, and all judgement, are committed to him. How then can it be otherwiſe in the new creation? To him the grant and promiſe of the bleſſing was given: he performs the terms on which it proceeded, by his obedience to the death: the fullneſs of the bleſſing is lodged in his hand, with abſolute powers to raiſe the dead, and to quicken whom he will: in one word, he ſtands at the head of mankind in relation to the ſpiritual and eternal world, in all reſpects but the event, as the firſt man, who the Apoſtle ſays was his figure, did with reſpect to this earthly periſhing one. "He has the "words of eternal life;" and in his right only it is to be had, and held by faith in him; that work of God, by which only the righteouſneſs of God can be had.

Could we make out diſtinctly, and with certainty, the right meaning of the Apoſtle's words verſ. 17. which ſtands thus in our tranſlation, *The covenant confirmed before of God*

God in Chriſt, the point would be fully cleared. We have ſaid enough before of the covenant. The Apoſtle puts it beyond diſpute, that it was the promiſe made to Abraham, and his one ſeed, who, he ſays, was Chriſt. On this he founds what he ſays here, *Theſe promiſes were confirmed.* The word expreſſes the ſtrongeſt ſecurity, as comprehending every thing neceſſary to give the fulleſt force and authority. And it could not be otherwiſe, when God was the ratifier, whoſe ſingle word gives all the firmneſs that can be imagined: for our Lord has told us, that "heaven "and earth may paſs away; but the leaſt "jot or tittle of his word cannot, until "the whole be fulfilled," Matth. v. 18. But there was ſtill a greater ſolemnity, indeed the greateſt that can be imagined, which we find the Apoſtle applying to this very purpoſe, Heb. vi. 17. 18. that he confirmed it by an oath, as we find it, Gen. xxii. 16. The ſame Apoſtle makes uſe of another word, Heb. viii. 6. ſpeaking of that διαθήκη, of which Chriſt, the Great Prieſt, is the mediator and ſurety, *that it was eſtabliſhed on better promiſes.* But the word he uſes is peculiarly ſignificant, viz. that the bet-

ter promiſes he ſpeaks of were put into ſuch an authoritative form, as to have all the force of a law, ſo as the grant might be pleaded, and muſt be ſuſtained in the higheſt court before the great judge.

The place the Apoſtle aſſigns to Chriſt in this ſolemn ratification is ſomewhat doubtful, as the ſenſe of the particle is by which he expreſſes it, which may be rendered either *in*, as our tranſlators do, or *to him*. The laſt is rather the moſt natural, and ſeems to be greatly favoured by what he had juſt ſaid of the promiſes being made to him as the one ſeed; and thus ſets forth to us that ſolemn tranſaction we have ſo often had recourſe to; as indeed it is what one may call the key to the ſyſtem of grace; namely, the Father's appointing the kingdom to his beloved Son, Luke xxii. 29. And thus the deed is completely finiſhed; the right and property is; and from the time (if we may call it time) that the grant was made, has been in his hands; nay, and the bleſſing itſelf, eternal life, in the utmoſt extent of it. And thus our tranſlators ſenſe of the particle ἐν comes in, and unites with the other, *the promiſes are confirmed in Chriſt*, i. e. as the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle ſays, "they are in him yea, and in "him amen."

And hence the juſtneſs and ſtrength of the Apoſtle's reaſoning appears with great evidence. The law could not reduce or diſannul an unalterable deed, ratified in ſuch an expreſs and ſolemn manner, as left no power in heaven or earth the leaſt permiſſion to alter any the leaſt point of it. And thus his concluſion comes out fully proved, that as God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promiſe, the law could not put it on any other footing. His words are ſtrong to the purpoſe. The word he uſes does not ſignify ſimple giving, that may be done in a conditional way, which might put it on the ſame bottom with a law, with promiſes annexed to the duties injoined. But the word ſignifies giving freely, and of mere love and favour; which leaves nothing to the perſon in whoſe favour the gift is made, but to receive it with gratitude and thankfulneſs. And thus it ſtood then, after the law was given; and thus it ſtands ſtill, and will ſtand to the end of the world, after all the attempts have been made, to ſubſtitute a law or covenant of man's deviſing in its room.

CHAP. iii.

CHAP. iii. 19. —— 29.

19. *Wherefore then ſerveth the law? It was added becauſe of tranſgreſſions, till the ſeed ſhould come to whom the promiſe was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.* 20. *Now a mediator is not a mediator of one; but God is one.* 21. *Is the law then againſt the promiſes of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteouſneſs ſhould have been by the law.* 22. *But the ſcripture hath concluded all under ſin, that the promiſe by faith of Jeſus Chriſt might be given to them that believe.* 23. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, ſhut up unto the faith, which ſhould afterwards be revealed.* 24. *Wherefore the law was our ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto Chriſt, that we might be juſtified by faith.* 25. *But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a ſchoolmaſter.* 26. *For ye are all the children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.* 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized unto Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Chriſt Jeſus.* 29. *And if ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe.*

THE Apoſtle having, in the foregoing verſes, given a fair and diſtinct ſtate of that divine conſtitution which commonly goes under the name of *the covenant*

venant of grace, as prior to, and independent on, the law of Moſes, and entirely different in its nature and tendency from that and all other laws which have been ſet up for anſwering the ends of it, to give a right and title to eternal life, and the full poſſeſſion of it in due time; and, at the ſame time, ſhewn it to be ſo perfect, that it neither needed, nor could admit of any ſupplement or aſſiſtance whatſoever; and as he was perfect maſter of his ſubject, and had the whole ſyſtem before him, he could eaſily foreſee every difficulty, and every exception that could be made. There was one very obvious one: If the ſyſtem of grace, as it was laid in Chriſt, and the grant and deed of gift made to him, was ſo complete, to what purpoſe was the law given? This he anſwers very diſtinctly, and particularly; and thence takes occaſion to give us a view of the Jewiſh and Gentile churches, which contributes greatly to the deſign of his writing, which was, to eſtabliſh the Galatians in the belief of the truth as it is in Jeſus, and caution them againſt the Judaizing zealots, who were labouring with all the art and cunning they were maſters

maſters of, to bring them to ſubmit to the law of Moſes.

Before we enter upon this part of the Apoſtle's diſcourſe, it will be of ſome uſe to make a remark or two on the iſſue the Apoſtle brings the ſtate he had given of what he calls διαθήκη to. In the preceding diſcourſe, I obſerved how earneſtly numbers of commentators contend for the covenant-ſenſe of that word, and that it never carries any other ſenſe in the New Teſtament; nay, and that this is the true and genuine ſenſe of the word. I forgot to take notice of their great argument, taken from the Jewiſh covenant, which, they ſay, none can deny was evidently ſuch; and yet, where-ever it is ſpoken of, it is called διαθήκη. What occurs to me, on the beſt judgement I can make of that tranſaction, is, that it was no covenant at all, but fulfilling the promiſe made to Abraham, of giving Canaan to them for a poſſeſſion, and a very wiſe ſyſtem of laws given them, founded in that free gift, and therefore is truly and properly called a grant or deed of gift. And the law given in conſequence of their poſſeſſion, keeps its own name in the New as well as the Old Teſtament

Teſtament. But the moſt bulky and diſtinguiſhing part even of that law, the order of the tabernacle, and temple-worſhip, was no other than a ſenſible exhibition of the bleſſing of Abraham, even that capital bleſſing, the grant and promiſe of eternal life, in Chriſt the promiſed ſeed, which was the very ſpirit of that law. This was the order which the great creator eſtabliſhed from the time that ſin entered the world; and men were forced to ſee, that they muſt either live by the mere grace and free favour of their creator, or periſh; and to this all ſubſequent divine interpoſals, the Moſaic eſpecially, were ſubſervient.

As by this conſtitution and order all the grace ever God deſigned for mankind, and particularly what comprehends all they are capable of receiving, and all they can ever have any need of, viz. the gift of eternal life, is lodged, treaſured up, in Jeſus Chriſt, and conveyed by him to them. The light in which the Apoſtle ſets this conveyance in Heb. ix. 15. *et ſeqq.* has induced many of the beſt interpreters to pitch upon a teſtamentary diſpoſition, as the only true meaning of the word conſtantly uſed throughout the

New Teſtament to expreſs this conveyance, It is certainly next to impoſſible for an attentive reader to avoid believing, that he who wrote theſe words took it in this view. Our Lord, in his farewell-ſpeech to his diſciples, recorded by the Apoſtle John, chap. xiv. xv. & xvi. ſpeaks ſo much through the whole ſermon, and particularly chap. xiv. 27. in the ſtrain of one ordering legacies to the friends he is leaving, as naturally leads one into that notion: and when one conſiders the nature and deſign of the death he was going to ſuffer, that it was a ſacrifice for their ſin, a ranſom for their lives, the price of their redemption from the curſe of the law, the bondage of ſin, and death itſelf, and the only mean by which the bleſſing could be conveyed; it muſt ſeem very odd to a man of plain underſtanding, what ſhould make men of ſenſe and learning ſo averſe to the moſt endearing views of our God and Saviour. I will not take upon me to ſay, but it is hard to avoid a ſuſpicion of ſomething of the ſame ſpirit with that which did ſo much miſchief in the Apoſtles days, viz. a prepoſterous zeal for law and moral government; which none who know what ſin is, durſt think

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of but with all the horrors of deſpair, were they not ſoothed with the views of a throne of grace, which they ſeem ſo loth to owe their all to.

On theſe views it will be eaſy to perceive the reaſon of the queſtion the Apoſtle puts, verſ. 19. and the juſtneſs of what he gives in anſwer to it. That poor thoughtleſs people had ſo far loſt ſight of the promiſes made to the fathers, except that loweſt one of the gift of Canaan, that they knew no other uſe of the law, but to make out a ſort of a title to life by their obedience. He gives a very different account of that tranſaction: *It was added*, he ſays, *becauſe of tranſgreſſions*; or *on account*, as the particle may be rendered, i. e. *for the ſake, of tranſgreſſions*. It might be aſked, For the tranſgreſſions of *what law* or rule? for himſelf gives it as a plain truth, That *where there is no law, there is no tranſgreſſion*. And by the word he uſes, *the law was added*, it appears there was ſomething ſubſiſting before that law which might have anſwered all the purpoſes of life without it, had it not been for tranſgreſſions. The native import of the word *tranſgreſſion* is, going beſides, or out of the way; which ſuppoſes ſuch a way to be

ſome how or other lying before them. Thoſe interpreters who make what they call the *moral law* the rule, and that the turning off from, or tranſgreſſing it, is what the Apoſtle means, find themſelves much difficulted to make good ſenſe of the Apoſtle's words. For beſides what this ſame Apoſtle tells us, Rom. vii. 7. *et ſeqq.* the law was ſo far from mending the matter, that ſin was rather irritated and ſtrengthened by it; and all it could do was to diſcover ſin, and ſlay the ſinner. But if it even could do any thing, why was it limited to the time *that the ſeed ſhould come*, who had the promiſed bleſſing to beſtow? as he plainly ſays it was.

This, if I miſtake not much, gives the true key to what he ſays of the law, that "it was added becauſe of tranſgreſſion." I need not obſerve, that it is the law of Moſes he ſays was added; and that it is a ſyſtem ſo exactly framed by perfect wiſdom, and ſo cloſely compacted, one part to anſwer another, and forward the deſign of the whole, that however different the parts may appear, yet they cannot be ſeparated or taken apart, without deſtroying the ſyſtem. We muſt likewiſe carry along with

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us the revelation of the ſyſtem of grace in the firſt promiſe, the univerſal apoſtaſy which brought on the deluge, the renovation of the promiſe of God's BERITH to Noah, who became heir to the righteouſneſs of faith, the apoſtaſy which ſoon took place among his deſcendents, and was like to become general, when God made a new grant of his BERITH to Abraham in the promiſe of the ſeed. By the time the Iſraelites were brought out of Egypt, the apoſtaſy had prevailed almoſt univerſally; and that the knowledge of God and his BERITH, or eternal ſalvation in the promiſed ſeed, might not be entirely loſt, that people were placed in the land of Canaan to be witneſſes for him, and a law given them, bearing the moſt perfect repreſentation that could be made of the ſtate of mankind, as God had eſtabliſhed it in the conſtitution of grace, or *law of faith*, as the Apoſtle calls it. The belief of the promiſe naturally, and I may ſay neceſſarily, inferred returns of gratitude and love. The tranſgreſſing this great law of love was ſtrongly cautioned againſt in that part of the law which is called *moral*. Death was the penalty; the moſt

moſt ſerious repentance could not ſecure pardon. Recourſe muſt be had to the ſacrifice which God had appointed; and when that was wilfully neglected by any, that ſoul was to be deſtroyed without mercy. I need not ſpend words to ſhow how all this was what the Apoſtle calls *a figure for the time then preſent*, Heb. ix. 9. and how well fitted for keeping up the knowledge of the way of life. But when the ſeed came, with the fullneſs of the bleſſing in his hand, there was no more occaſion for figures and models. The way of life by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, and the free ſovereign gift of grace, was fairly laid open, and the whole counſel of God was notified to the world with the greateſt plainneſs of ſpeech.

What follows in this and in the next verſe, which is viſibly an inference from this, or rather the improvement of it to the purpoſe he intended to ſerve by it, has occaſioned a great variety of conjectures about the true ſenſe and meaning. The word he uſes, διαταγὴς, is ſomewhat ambiguous, and may be conſtructed, either to refer to the giving of the law at Sinai, or to the internal frame and conſtitution of it, and the order eſtabliſhed by it.

Moſt

Moſt interpreters take it in the firſt view, and find difficulties next to inſuperable in almoſt every word. Our tranſlators have made uſe of a word which is certainly too ſtrong for the connection in which they have placed it. It was, ſay they, *ordained* by angels; which ſeems naturally to point us to them, not as miniſters or ſervants, but either as the authors and contrivers of it, or at leaſt thoſe by whoſe authority that law was given. But as this is too groſs for any one to ſurmiſe, it could not be the meaning of the tranſlators, much leſs that of the Apoſtle.

The furtheſt, then, that any one can venture to ſay, is, that it was given by the *miniſtry* of angels. But the difficulty caſts up, What miniſtry, or what part to aſſign them in that ſolemn tranſaction? Moſes, it is evident, takes no notice of any creature employed there, but thunder and lightning, flaming fire and thick ſmoke. And when he tells us expreſsly, that JEHOVAH ſpake all theſe words, it would ſeem too daring boldneſs for ſuch a puny being as the moſt learned man is, to take upon him to ſay, it was not JEHOVAH,

HOVAH, but an angel who perſonated him, who aſſumed his name, and ſpake theſe words. There is indeed a text, Pſal. civ. 4. where the Pſalmiſt is deſcribing the majeſty of God, which might very literally be tranſlated, "Who maketh the "winds his meſſengers, and flaming fire "his ſervants." But I do not find that any have applied this text to the preſent purpoſe. It muſt be obſerved, that the Apoſtle to the Hebrews, (who, I believe, was the ſame Paul who wrote this,) in deſcribing this awful ſcene, Heb. xii. 18. 19. ſpeaks indeed exactly as Moſes had done before him; but not one word of *angels*. Theſe he ſets before us in another ſort of company, verſ. 22. And after all that has been ſaid, or, I believe, can be ſaid, on this view, we muſt leave the words juſt as we found them.

The difficulties that ariſe about the *Mediator*, and giving the law *in his hand*, are almoſt, if not altogether, as inſurmountable. Some, conſidering that Jeſus Chriſt is the ſole mediator between God and man on the Chriſtian plan, or diſpenſation of grace; and that he is the only

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one in whoſe hands a matter of ſuch moment could be truſted, have concluded, that he muſt be the mediator the Apoſtle means. But he was the mediator of another and more excellent diſpenſation, differing very widely from the legal one; and beſides, even in that held another and more honourable ſtation, as it may eaſily be proved, that it was he who appeared in all the glory deſcribed by Moſes, and ſpoke all the words of that law. There is only one place, Heb. ii. 2. where angels are ſaid to have ſpoken on that occaſion. But the Apoſtle himſelf gives good ground to think, that *angels* there ſhould be tranſlated *meſſengers*; for he makes no mention of them, chap. i. where he recounts the different ways in which God had ſpoken unto the fathers.

On theſe, and ſuch conſiderations, the greateſt number fix upon Moſes as the mediator: and he certainly bore that character in giving the law. He ſtood between God and the people; he received the law immediately from God, and delivered it to the people: but this was only an after part, which no angels had any concern in; and in the ſolemn part, God himſelf ſpoke, and Moſes had no more concern in it than

any of the other Iſraelites preſent on that occaſion.

But, after all, the word which our tranſlators not improperly render *ordained*, directs us rather to the nature of that law, as it was framed by the all-wiſe author of it, than to the manner in which it was given. And in this view, the particle διὰ, which we render *by*, is of a very extenſive ſignification, and may be applied to any perſon or thing which has any concern in the fact one is ſpeaking upon. We are certainly informed, that the miniſtry of angels was much uſed under that diſpenſation, and ſuch a reſpect had to them, and veneration paid them, that the Apoſtle found it neceſſary to caution the Coloſſians againſt it, Col. ii. 18. The Apoſtle likewiſe is at great pains to ſhow how much they were inferior to Chriſt, Heb. i. 6.; and in particular he obſerves, Heb. ii. 5. that the ſubjects of Chriſt's kingdom, commonly called *the world*, or rather *the age to come*, was not put in ſubjection to angels; which more than implies, that the then age, or the Jewiſh conſtitution, was ſubjected to them.

As to what is ſaid of a mediator; by the

the very frame of that law, as it was ordained and appointed of God, the high prieſt was conſtituted a mediator in the moſt proper ſenſe of that word: μεσιτης is one who ſtands between two parties, and by whom, whatever correſpondence they have, is managed. Such was the place and office of the high prieſt; for the inferior ones were but his aſſiſtants, in many caſes only his miniſters; but in the moſt ſolemn part of his office, when he went into the holy of holies, made the atonement, and came out and bleſſed the people, he was quite alone. His office was eſſential in that conſtitution, and in his hand the law was without a figure ordered and lodged; as fully appears from the whole Old-Teſtament hiſtory, and is further confirmed in the New, particularly in the epiſtle to the Hebrews.

The Apoſtle's concluſion from this, verſ. 20. is ſelf-evident, viz. that *a mediator is not of one*; as it is plain, where there is a middle perſon, there muſt be at leaſt two; and if we carry along with us, what the Apoſtle had fully proved, that God himſelf made the promiſe to Abraham and his ſeed, we need not be at a loſs, either

about the meaning of what he adds, *that God is one*, or the ſtrength of his reaſoning; as this ſingle circumſtance proves an eſſential difference between the promiſe, and the law of Moſes, that they could never be deſigned to anſwer one and the ſame purpoſe, of conveying either the right to, or the poſſeſſion of, life.

That this was the import of the Apoſtle's reaſoning, appears from the queſtion he foreſaw might be put upon it, and therefore puts it himſelf, in order to clear what he had ſaid, and introduce what he had further to ſay on that ſubject, verſ. 21. *Is the law then againſt the promiſe?* which no body would ever have thought of, if occaſion had not been given, by ſtating the difference there was in their very nature, and, what we may call, their eſſential conſtitution and adminiſtration. This he rejects with an earneſtneſs that ſuch a ſuppoſition, ſo injurious to the perfectly wiſe author of both, deſerved; *God forbid*; and ſhows, with great evidence, that though the *law* and the *promiſe* were ſo very different, they were by no means contrary to one another, being appointed and deſigned to anſwer

ſwer very different purpoſes. The *promiſe* was deſigned to make a complete conveyance of righteouſneſs and life: the *law* was not intended to convey either, but to be ſubſervient to the promiſe; as it is in divers reſpects, and particularly by being ſo framed as to put thoſe who were under it on the abſolute neceſſity of either continuing under the curſe, or having recourſe to Chriſt, and the promiſe ſealed and ratified in his death.

He acknowledges, indeed, what no body can refuſe, that *had there been a law given which could have conveyed life, righteouſneſs and juſtification ſhould have been certainly had by that ſame law*; in which caſe the law and the promiſe ſhould have been competitors; or rather, there could have been no room left for a free gift, as the bleſſing ſhould have been a matter, not of grace, but of debt. And here it is to be obſerved, that the Apoſtle does not confine himſelf to the law of Moſes; but, as if he had foreſeen, (and the Spirit which directed his pen certainly did foreſee), the inſolent pretences that have been made to a law which could give, and from which men might certainly expect, even

even eternal life; he ſpeaks with ſuch aſſurance, that we may depend on it, that God never gave any ſuch law, nor, we may ſay, could give any, when he had given life into the hands of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, to be communicated and conveyed by him to all that come to him, or, in other words, believe on him; and that is the ſame as believing the teſtimony and record which God has made concerning his Son.

The word the Apoſtle makes uſe of, on the ſuppoſition he makes of a law giving life, ſtrongly expreſſes the abſurdity of it, and of any hopes or expectations of this kind. Was man in poſſeſſion of ſuch a life as wanted nothing but being lengthened out to eternity, poſſibly ſuch a law might be given, if the creator ſo pleaſed, as might attain that end. But that is not the caſe: for to ſay nothing of the ſpiritual life, or, the way in which ſpirits live, (which all the children of Adam are as ignorant of as how angels live; and are as really dead to God, and the buſineſs and enjoyments of the ſpiritual world, as an inanimate body is to this; excepting only, that they are capable of hearing

hearing the report of these things, when made in the language they are accustomed to); to say nothing of this, the Apostle's word, in its proper sense, signifies to *quicken*, or to make alive; which evidently supposes the subject thus quickened to be dead. And I believe there is no man so devoid of common sense, as to imagine he shall never die; and it is but very little short of this, to imagine that one can restore himself to life by any thing he can do. It is true, there may be a promise of life annexed to any law the creator pleases, but then it is not the person's obedience to the law that quickens, any more than it was Naaman's dipping himself in Jordan that cured him of his leprosy. In both cases it is equally the exertion of that almighty power which only can raise the dead, in consequence of the promise; and comes as much by faith, as if there had been no law at all.

But however happily adjusted a law may be conceived to be, and however express the promise of life might be to the observers of it, whenever that fails, all hopes are of course at an end: nor is it possible for the transgressor to be reinstated,

reinſtated, but by an act of grace in his favour; and even that, the ſanction or curſe of the law makes impoſſible in reaſon's eye, even as impoſſible as it is for God to lie. And thus the Apoſtle deſcribes the ſtate of mankind, Jews and Gentiles: for it deſerves our obſervation, that he again changes his uſual phraſe; he does not ſay, the law *has concluded all under ſin*, (that would have reached only thoſe who were under it), but that the *ſcripture* had done it. The ſcripture, as any one may ſee who will peruſe it, is merely a record of facts; but not ſuch facts as are recorded in common hiſtories: it is the hiſtory of God, a record of what he has done and ſaid; or, which is nearly the ſame, of what men have done and ſaid, on great variety of occaſions, and of ſuch circumſtantial events as perfect wiſdom ſaw fit to be recorded for ſetting forth and illuſtrating his true character, that by this means men might arrive at the right knowledge of him whom they are to worſhip, and of what they have either to hope or fear from his hand: and thus it will be found, that when the Apoſtle ſays *the ſcripture had concluded all under ſin*, it

it is the same as if God himself had done it.

It would be next to an endless labour, to gather up the particulars belonging to this head; it will be sufficient to observe, that among the first things we meet with there, by the sentence given by the great sovereign on that occasion, which has been punctually executed on all mankind down to this day, and no doubt will be to the end of the world, all are bound under death, and sin is the sting by which it kills. One needs no more than read the history, to see how, as the world advanced in years, sin gathered strength; until the world came to that state which we find described, Psal. xiv. & liii.; repeated by the Apostle, Rom. iii. 10. *et seqq.* One would have thought, that such a state of things should have brought down such vengeance as fell upon the old world, or Sodom and Gomorrah: but God had other intentions; the world of mankind was thus bound under sin, that the promise, by the faith of Jesus Christ, might be given to them who believe. Having had occasion to say so much of the *promise*, and particularly how it sometimes

ſignifies the promiſe, as it is the deed of the promiſer, and ſometimes the matter of it, or the bleſſing conveyed by it, we need ſay no more of it here; as indeed the promiſe of God, and the fulfilment of it, are in effect the ſame: which makes it of little moment in which of the two ſenſes we take it, where it is not plainly determined by the context, as it is here, to be the bleſſing given by promiſe to Abraham, and to his ſeed.

We have the ſame to ſay of *faith*, which in common uſe ſignifies both the act of believing, and what one believes; which are as inſeparably connected. This ſometimes occaſions an ambiguity which may be of ſome moment. There is ſomething of this in the words before us. The faith of Jeſus Chriſt may denote, either his perſonal faith, or, that which is to be believed concerning him; and this produces another doubt, Whether the Apoſtle deſigns this, or one's actual believing it. If we take it in the firſt ſenſe, for the perſonal faith of Jeſus himſelf, that aſſured confidence he had in his heavenly Father for making good the gift he had made him of the kingdom; in the ſtrength of which

which he endured the croſs, deſpiſing at once the ſhame and pain of it; and thereby deſtroyed death, and him that had the power of it: in this way we are carried up to the riſe and ſpring of the promiſe, and the way how the bleſſing is conveyed and ſecured to the faith of the believer; a view which ought never to be overlooked, as it is at once the pattern and foundation on which the Chriſtian's faith is built.

Thus indeed the promiſe is, in all reſpects, by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt: but that phraſe moſt commonly denotes what we have ſet before us to be believed in, the teſtimony or record which God has made concerning him; which yet is ſo far from excluding Chriſt's perſonal faith, that it is an eſſential part of the teſtimony, without which, neither the promiſe, nor the promiſed bleſſing, could ever have exiſted. And thus the Apoſtle's meaning will come out to be, That the promiſe is held forth and conveyed to mankind in the goſpel, to be believed and truſted to; and the bleſſing is thereby conveyed, and thus the promiſe made good, to all who believe; and which cannot be

received in any other manner, or by any other means. That no promiſe can be received, but by believing the promiſer, will not be denied, or even doubted of; and as God's ſaying and doing is the ſame thing, he who believes the promiſe can have no doubt about receiving the bleſſing, and reckoning upon it as his own; though he cannot tell how God quickens a dead ſinner, how he conveys the Spirit of life, nor how that Spirit ſupports, maintains, and carries on, the buſineſs of eternal life, "to the meaſure of the ſtature "of the fullneſs of Chriſt," as the Apoſtle emphatically expreſſes it, to make them bear the image of the heavenly man, as they had done that of the earthly. I need not obſerve, that δωρεα ſignifies a free gift, not a reward for doing.

In the 23d and following verſes, the Apoſtle ſhews the ſtate of the Jews before faith came, and the wiſe and kind purpoſes the law anſwered to them under that period. I believe hardly any body doubts that it is the time in which the law continued in full force the Apoſtle deſigns; and that was until Chriſt came, as we find himſelf explaining it, chap. iv. 4.

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Whether, by *faith coming*, he means the light the promiſe was ſet in by the appearance of him who had the bleſſing in his hand, ready for all that would come to him, and receive it from his hand, or their actual believing, is not worth diſputing; for this good reaſon, that the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt anſwers no purpoſe to any perſon, until it is known and believed: and he ſeems to take it ſometimes in one of theſe ſenſes, and ſometimes in the other. When he ſpeaks of the faith which ſhould afterward be revealed, it ſeems plain, that he means the revelation of Chriſt in the fleſh; and downward, when he ſpeaks of faith being come, it is as plain he means actual believing, as we ſhall ſee by and by.

Before faith came, they were kept under the law, ſo our tranſlators render the Apoſtle's words. But *kept* is too weak a word to anſwer that which he uſes. Properly, it ſignifies being guarded, as kings and princes are by their life-guards and attendants, or towns and caſtles by their garriſons. It is the ſame word the Apoſtle Peter uſes for the ſecurity and ſafety of thoſe who are the heirs of the eternal

nal inheritance, that *they are kept by the mighty power of God*, 1 Pet. i. 5. In general, it ſignifies ſafe and ſure cuſtody; and then is ſometimes uſed to ſignify confinement, as priſoners are confined: and this way he ſeems to carry it, by what he adds of their being *ſhut up*; ſo confined, that they were not at liberty to go whither they would; no way being left open but that one of faith, which was to be revealed in due time.

It may be worth while to conſider how the law of Moſes kept thoſe who were under it thus cloſely confined and guarded, ſo as to anſwer all the purpoſes of what we call a *pedagogue*, adopting the Greek word into our language, literally, a *guide*, or *leader of children*, for a *ſchoolmaſter*, as we render it, is not quite ſo ſignificant, to lead them to Chriſt. Thus the law inſtructed them firſt in the knowledge of ſin, by ſetting duty, the commandments of God, fairly before them; it likewiſe revealed the iſſue and wages of ſin, and by its ſanction and curſe bound them under death. It gave indeed a glimpſe of pardon and forgiveneſs in the appropriated ſacrifices, and the promiſe

miſe of forgiveneſs annexed to them. But this went no further than exemption from preſent puniſhment, and could not exempt them from that death which paſſes upon all men. It gave no hope, not the leaſt hint of a reſurrection or future life. "It was impoſſible that the blood of bulls "and goats, or the ſprinkling and waſhings "directed there, could take away ſin:" and ſo long as that continues, death, its inſeparable attendant, muſt come along with it. So that they muſt either flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope ſet before them in the promiſe, or periſh for ever.

But, may one ſay, was not the promiſe, in being from the beginning of the world, on the faith of which the patriarchs before Abraham lived; and after it was renewed to Abraham, and the bleſſing lodged in his ſeed, was it not the ſame faith with that which was preached by Chriſt and his apoſtles; only with this difference, that before, faith was pitched on Chriſt to come in due time, and ſince, on the ſame Chriſt as already come? How then could the Apoſtle ſay, that *the faith was to be revealed afterward?* as if it never

ver had been revealed before. All this is true; and yet what the Apoſtle ſays is very proper for expreſſing what he was laying before thoſe for whom he wrote. The *promiſe*, the *ſeed Chriſt*, and the *bleſſing*, were all in being, and revealed and publiſhed to the world, and particularly to the Jewiſh nation; but there was a vail or covering over them, ſee 2 Cor. xii. 13.—18. like that which ſeparated the moſt holy place in the tabernacle and temple, until it was rent at the death of Chriſt. The Apoſtle's word properly ſignifies, removing the vail or covering which kept them from being fairly ſeen. But when God, who commanded light to ſhine out of darkneſs, made the light of his glory to ſhine forth in the face of Jeſus Chriſt, then the promiſe and the bleſſing, life and immortality, were ſet in a fair and open light, 2 Tim. i. 10. where the Apoſtle's word is not as our tranſlators render it *brought to light*, but new light thrown on life and immortality, as is evidently done in the goſpel; particularly in the death and reſurrection of Chriſt, and the glory that followed.

When the end, then, which the law of Moſes was deſigned for, came to be anſwered,

ſwered, and thoſe who were under its direction and leading were brought to Chriſt, which the Apoſtle expreſſes by faith being come, there was no more need of the pedagogue, being now greatly better provided. I need not obſerve again, that when he ſpeaks of faith's being come, he has not only the manifeſtation of Chriſt in the goſpel in his eye, but likewiſe the receiving and believing it. It is obvious, that he here changes his expreſſion again; and inſtead of *we*, which he had uſed until he had brought the Jews he ſpeaks of to Chriſt, he makes uſe of *ye*, addreſſing himſelf to the whole churches of Galatia, made up of both believing Jews and Gentiles. He had joined them before as equally children of Abraham, and heirs of the promiſe. Now he tells them how they came to be ſo, and gives them another, and infinitely higher title, indeed the very higheſt a creature can poſſibly attain, *Ye are all*, both Jews and Gentiles, *children of God by faith in Chriſt Jeſus.*

Though this tranſlation is as exactly literal as can be, there is yet ſomething of ambiguity in the expreſſion which I think is not in the original. The doubt is,

whether the words, *in Chriſt*, are to be joined with *faith*, which immediately precedes, or with *being the children of God*. On an overly view, it may be thought nearly the ſame ſenſe which way we take it: for when the title of *children of God* is ſaid to be by faith in Jeſus Chriſt, Chriſt is kept as much in his proper place as the teſtimony of God concerning him puts him in. But, if I am not miſtaken, the Apoſtle deſigns ſomething further; namely, to ſay, that their ſonſhip was not ſo much by believing, as by the conſequence and fruit of it, viz. their being in Chriſt. He ſays indeed very plainly, that they were the children of God by faith; but it was only in Chriſt that they were ſo. The phraſe εν Χριστω is never, ſo far as I remember, joined with πιστις, when believing in Chriſt is deſigned; but εις or επι Χριστον. And thus he explains it in the following verſe, where he gives the reaſon of what he ſays in this, That *as many as were baptized into Chriſt*, as all believers on him were, *had put on Chriſt*; which certainly muſt import their union with him, by which they become Abraham's ſeed, and heirs of the promiſe.

This expreſſion we find brought in by our Lord himſelf, John xv. 5. where, un-

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der the ſimilitude of a vine, and the branches, he aſſerts a mutual in-being, believers in him, and he in them. And John xvii. 21. he carries it as high as it can go; by the Father's being in him, and he in them, they become one in them, and are as nearly united to God as a creature can be. He had ſet forth this oneneſs, John vi. 51. by the neareſt union known among men, viz. that between the food, and the body which is nouriſhed by it, ſetting forth himſelf as the true bread which came down from heaven; and which not only ſupports, but gives life where it was not, to all who receive it. Thence it became the common title of a believer, *a man in Chriſt*. The apoſtles, after him, pitch on the neareſt and cloſeſt unions known among men, to illuſtrate the nearneſs and intimacy of this union, viz. the huſband and wife, the head and the body; which all contribute ſomething to give us ſome notion of what is indeed incomprehenſible in our preſent ſtate. This Apoſtle gives us the neareſt, 1 Cor. vi. 16. 17. *He that is joined to the Lord is one ſpirit*; and thence of courſe one life, one mind, the ſame ſentiments and affections, and therefore

the ſame way of living: there muſt likewiſe be the ſame relations, for all Chriſtians are the children of God in him; the ſame poſſeſſions and inheritance, and the ſame right and title to hold it by.

The Apoſtle, verſ. 27. gives a very ſignificant deſcription of this ſame union under a well-known image or ſimilitude: *They who are baptized into Chriſt, have put on Chriſt*; they who are baptized into Chriſt, are baptized into his death, and made conform, and planted into the likeneſs of it. They are all this ſame Apoſtle's expreſſions, and he gives another yet ſtronger deſcription, if poſſible, in his own caſe, viz. that *he was crucified with Chriſt*. And in conſequence of this, he that believes in Chriſt, puts off the old man with his deeds, *i. e.* the child of Adam, with all his relations, connections, and dependencies: he puts on Chriſt, as men do garments for covering nakedneſs, for defence againſt the inclemencies of the air, and even for ornament. The expreſſion beſpeaks the Chriſtian ſo covered, and, we may ſay, incloſed in him, that in a right Chriſtian there is nothing to be ſeen but Chriſt; their whole conſtitution, I mean that

that which makes them Chriſtians; and conſequently every thing that is good and amiable, either in their temper or conduct, and whatever their attainments and enjoyments are, or what well-grounded hopes and expectations they have, all are owing to Chriſt, and to him belongs all the glory and honour of them.

By theſe hints, if rightly purſued, it will appear, that this, and ſuch other ſcripture-expreſſions, are not mere metaphors, ſuch as are uſed by orators and other polite writers merely for ornamenting and enlivening their diſcourſes, but have really more of analogy than metaphor in them; the only way by which any conceptions can be formed of unſeen things, which cannot be brought directly under our obſervation. The author of them knew perfectly the whole of the ſubject, and what were the fitteſt images to repreſent it; and therefore could not fall into thoſe miſtakes which human metaphors, and imagery, are often in danger of betraying inſenſibly their readers and hearers into very dangerous errors.

From this, the cloſeſt of all connections

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of every individual Chriſtian with Chriſt, neceſſarily ariſes a very cloſe connection and union among themſelves; which the Apoſtle ſtrongly aſſerts, verſ. 28. of which he gives us a very beautiful repreſentation, Rom. xii. 4. 5. "As the body is one, and "hath many members; ſo we being many, "are one body in Chriſt, and every one "members one of another." It has been often obſerved, that all mankind come into the world in a ſtate of perfect equality; and were what the Apoſtle ſaid to the Athenians of the true God well underſtood, viz. that "in him we live, and move, and "have our beings," the natural connection of mankind with one another would appear ſo ſtrong, that one could hardly help wondering, how the little different intereſts and diſtinctions among men ſhould ever have been able to break it, as we ſee actually done. Nor indeed can this breach ever be made up, but by the removal of theſe make-bates, and eſtabliſhing mankind on their original bottom. This we ſee done effectually in Chriſt, by being made conform unto him in his death; and thus becoming dead to a preſent world, and united into one body in Chriſt, who

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is all in all to them, and in whom they are perfectly complete; so complete, that they can do all things through Christ strengthening them. There of course all wordly distinctions vanish, which cannot be better expressed than in his own words: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither "bond nor free, neither male nor female, "but all are one in Christ Jesus:" not only one life, for indeed that is the case of all mankind however little it is minded, but one spirit influencing their whole conduct.

On this view he gives the finishing evidence of what he had said before, that all who believe in Christ, Gentiles, as well as natural Jews, are the children of Abraham. They might have been justly enough called and reckoned so; because they believed God as he did: but here is a nearer and more sensible relation, by this their union with Christ, Abraham's one seed; they are strictly and properly his seed, and thence as really heirs of the promise, as himself was.

CHAP.

CHAP. iv. 1. —— 7.

1. *Now I say, that the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant though he be lord of all;* 2. *But is under tutors and governors, until the time appointed of the father.* 3. *Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:* 4. *But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law,* 5. *To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* 6. *And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* 7. *Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.*

IT was a matter of great moment to these Galatians, and all in their situation, to know well what it was that their new teachers were so earnest to draw them in to. The Apostle was deeply concerned about them; he knew the danger: and that they might not run blindfold into the snare, he had told them the true intent and purpose of the law; that it did not, nor was ever designed to answer, any other purpose, but to lead those who were under it to Christ. When that was done, there was no further occasion for it: nor could

could it anſwer any purpoſe, I mean the law of Moſes as it was given to the Jewiſh nation; that it could anſwer no purpoſe, but bad ones, which he had more than hinted in his former diſcourſe, and by and by deſigned to aſſert in the ſtrongeſt terms. He now proceeds to ſhow, in what ſituation he and his countrymen were while they continued under it.

He had ſaid, and proved, that they were held in cloſe cuſtody, confined, as it were, under a guard, that they could not exceed the bounds ſet them; a ſtate rather more diſagreeable to mankind than open ſervitude. But that ſame confinement was greatly for their intereſt: it was deſigned to continue but for a time *until the ſeed ſhould come*, by whom all who would accept of that favour were to be tranſlated into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. This very naturally led him to another image, verſ. 1. & 2. by which he repreſents their condition, viz. that of *an heir* in his *childhood* and minority. However large the eſtate may be which he is heir to, yet until the time come that the father has ſet for his entering upon the diſpoſal and management of it, *he differs nothing from a*

ſervant, as our tranſlators modeſtly render it: but the Apoſtle's word denotes a *bond-ſervant*, or what we call a *ſlave*. The ſlave was ſecured in food and clothing, ſuch as his maſter ſaw fit to allot him: And the richeſt heir has no more, except what is neceſſary for his education; and even that he has not at his own option, but what his *tutors* and curators, thoſe whom the management of the inheritance is committed to, are pleaſed to chuſe for him.

Such, he ſays, was the condition of all who were held under the law: they were in a ſtate of infancy or nonage; and they were held *in bondage*, with what was equivalent to the drudgery of that ſtate, learning the rudiments or *elements* of what they underſtood nothing of; but which yet were to be of uſe to them in their riper age. I need not add any thing to what I had occaſion to obſerve on the former chapter. What we have here laid before us concerns the employment, or taſk rather, which they who were put under the guardianſhip of the law had impoſed on them: and if we underſtand it right, we will need no further evidence of

of their being what the Apoſtle calls them, little *children*, in a ſtate of nonage, as we call it.

Our tranſlation makes but a very dark account of what they were in bondage under. *The elements of the world*, the Apoſtle's word, does indeed ſignify the materials of which any thing is made, before they are put into their due form and order; but it ſignifies likewiſe what we call the rudiments or ground-work, the elements or fundamental principles of any art or ſcience; and which are commonly taught to make way for the more perfect knowledge of that art or ſcience. And ſuch they muſt have been: for they were deſigned to lead to Chriſt, and that high ſtation in him which the child thus kept in bondage was deſigned for. And ſuch we find all the inſtitutions and ordinances of the law were; wiſely framed into a compacted ſyſtem for anſwering this purpoſe; and ſo neceſſary, that without ſome good acquaintance with theſe, it is hardly poſſible, I might ſay altogether impoſſible, to attain a right underſtanding of the goſpel of Chriſt, as might eaſily be ſhown almoſt in every inſtance. The

whole of the New-Teſtament language is founded on Old-Teſtament uſages; particularly what relates to the fundamental doctrine of the prieſthood and ſacrifice of Chriſt for the putting away ſin. The whole ritual inſtitutions were ſubſervient to this purpoſe; and there is hardly one circumſtance that is not alluded to in ſome part or other of the apoſtolical writings.

Thus far all is plain and eaſy. The only difficulty is, how the Apoſtle comes to call theſe divine inſtitutions elements or rudiments of *the world*, when they anſwered the ſpiritual purpoſe of preparing and leading forward the ſtudent to the knowledge of Chriſt and his ſalvation; his high office as Saviour, and his ſpiritual kingdom. We need ſeek no further for the reaſon of this title. Theſe ſpiritual and heavenly things were figured, or we might ſay, imaged, by ſenſible and material things. God ſhowed Moſes in the mount a pattern of the tabernacle, and all its furniture contrived by himſelf, that is, by perfect wiſdom; and gave him a charge to make all things exactly according to it. All the materials were earthly; the prieſts were men of the world;

world; it *ſtood*, the Apoſtle ſays, Heb. ix. 10. *in meats and drinks, and divers waſhings;—the blood of bulls and of goats, and the aſhes of an heifer, ſprinkling the unclean:* A worldly ſanctuary, a worldly miniſtry, and a worldly ſervice. A ſhadow indeed, and a ſort of figure of good things, very burdenſome, Acts xv. 10. and very unprofitable: "for it was impoſſible that the blood "of bulls and goats could take away ſin," nor could all their waſhings cleanſe from its defilement. The utmoſt effect of them was, "to ſanctify to the purification of the fleſh," and put them in a capacity of approaching the worldly ſanctuary, and drawing near to the material exhibition of the glory of God in the light of fire and cloud, as in the wilderneſs, and the cherubim of glory ſhadowing the mercy-ſeat.

Had the unhappy Jewiſh nation learned theſe rudiments to any purpoſe, they would have felt and groaned under their bondage; and (as thoſe who underſtood them did) have looked and longed for the promiſed Redeemer, who was to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, to deliver them from all their enemies, and effectually ſave them from the capital enemy, the devil and his works,

works, ſin and death. This great event the Apoſtle deſcribes with an apparently laboured exactneſs, where every word has a peculiar weight, and every circumſtance leads to the concluſion he has in view, viz. to demonſtrate the abſurdity and folly of returning to that ſtate of bondage, from which the bleſſed Son of God came to redeem and deliver them. But there was ſomething in the caſe of the Galatians yet more monſtrouſly abſurd, to attempt this after they were delivered and brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. It muſt therefore be worth while to conſider, with the utmoſt attention, how he lays it: for he was none of thoſe who multiplied words merely to amuſe his readers.

We need not ſtand upon what he ſays, verſ. 4. of the time when this great event was brought about. *The fullneſs of time* is evidently the ſame with the time appointed by the Father for the expiring of the child's minority, and entering him upon the right of ſonſhip, and enjoyment of the inheritance. And were we able to gather up every circumſtance of that time; how the Meſſiah or the Chriſt was promiſed, and how he was propheſied of; what circumſtances

ſtances the world was then in; and particularly how the knowledge of the true God was entirely loſt in the Heathen world, and very near being ſo among the Jews themſelves, who, our Lord ſays, had made the law of God of no effect by their traditions; we would ſee plainly how wiſely this particular point of time was pitched on for the coming of the Redeemer.

When the appointed time *was come*, the promiſe came; and it came in a very extraordinary manner: *God ſent forth his Son.* The tradition of a Son of God being ſent one way or other into the world, was certainly very ancient, and muſt have been very general, as we find it current in all ages, in one ſhape or other. But when the knowledge of the true God was loſt, the tradition of courſe degenerated into fable. The Jews had it preſerved in their record; but it does not appear they had any further notion of it, than that he ſhould be a deſcendent of David, whom God would treat as his Son, in ſome ſuch manner as he did Solomon. This their miſtake was grown to a great height at the time Chriſt appeared among them.

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They expected nothing higher in their Meſſiah, whom they likewiſe called the *Son* of God, than that he ſhould be a great worldly king, and ſhould erect an univerſal empire, and ſubdue all nations under them. When our Lord put the queſtion to them, How he could be the Son of David, when David himſelf, and under the direction of the divine Spirit too, calls him his Lord? they knew not what to anſwer, as they had no notion of any ſuch perſon as could have any claim to ſo high a title. It is not, I believe, refuſed by any who believe there ever was ſuch a perſon as Jeſus, that he exiſted long before he appeared perſonally among men. And thoſe who believe the New-Teſtament record, muſt believe that he was before any creature; becauſe "all things were made by "him, and without him there was not any "thing made that was made." But whether the Eternal Word derived the title of *Son*, from ſome, to us altogether inconceivable, eternal generation; or from the place he holds in the univerſe as the immediate Creator, Supporter, Governor, and Judge, and particularly in relation to mankind, as their Deliverer and Saviour; has been, and

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ſtill is doubted, and will not be eaſily determined with certainty, as he bore that character in the eternal counſels of God, and all things were created by him, and for him.

But however that may be, it is certain, that this ſonſhip runs very high; ſo far above the angels, the higheſt order of creatures, that they are commanded to worſhip him, and acknowledge him as their Lord; and carries his character ſo far into Deity, that it will be hard to find any ground of diſtinction. Nay, if we believe that ſaying of our Lord, (and there can be no doubt of its truth), that "whatever "the Father does, the Son doth likewiſe," it will be impoſſible to find any veſtige of inferiority, unleſs we catch at what the man Jeſus ſays of himſelf while he was one of us on earth. Such a perſon ſent forth of God, muſt infer ſome extraordinary commiſſion to be executed; which however high and difficult, we may be well aſſured, cannot miſcarry in a hand who has almighty power to employ at pleaſure. And he needed a degree of power greatly above that of man, or indeed of any creature. He had men to buy

out from the bondage they were under to the law. He had not only to bring them into God's family, and give them the name and rights of children, but to make them really ſo; to quicken the dead, and to give eternal life.

The Apoſtle takes notice only of two preparatory circumſtances; but they are ſuch as include all the reſt: *He was made of a woman, and made under the law.* So our tranſlators render his words; and not amiſs, if they did not ſound rather too paſſively, and thus be in danger of leading ignorant readers to imagine that the Son had no hand in this marvellous diſpenſation, but acted entirely in obedience to his Father's will, and the orders he received from him. Such orders himſelf ſays he had; but they were ſuch as himſelf, being one with the Father, had concerted in the eternal decree. The word the Apoſtle uſes, which our tranſlators render *made*, can infer no ſuch conſequences. It is applied both to perſons and events, and denotes their becoming what they are, however that is done. When applied to perſons, it not only denotes their being born, by which they became men, but all the changes they

they undergo, either in their perſons, circumſtances. or temper. Every one's obſervation will afford inſtances enough. In the preſent caſe, the ſame word denotes his being born of a woman, and becoming ſubjected to the law mankind were under, and which was the neceſſary conſequence of his birth.

He was made or born *of a woman*; the ſame thing which the Evangeliſt John expreſſes, by "the Word being made *fleſh*," or becoming fleſh; a word ſtrongly marking the human nature as it ſubſiſts in the natural children of Adam, and very frequently made uſe of in this ſenſe. One would think this needed not be thought ſuch an incredible thing as ſome pretend. It is indeed a miracle of divine condeſcenſion, and the ſtrongeſt and moſt undoubted evidence of what the angels proclaimed when he came into the world, "Peace and "good will toward man." Our Lord and his apoſtles carry it, I cannot ſay higher, but in rather more endearing terms, God ſo loved the world;—he commendeth his love to us, &c. And had there been no more, than the moſt high God, whom the heavens and heaven of heavens cannot contain, condeſcending to dwell with

men upon earth; and that by making ſo near an approach as to unite himſelf to ſuch low and ill-deſerving creatures; even this would have been ſuch a pledge of gracious and kind purpoſes, as ſhould at once have raiſed our hopes, and drawn out the ſtrongeſt expreſſions of gratitude and love; and might have paſſed for the higheſt evidence of the moſt perfect love, had it not been for what followed, and what the Son of God was ſent to do, and actually accompliſhed in the fleſh. This indeed is very wonderful: but that the creator could, if he ſo pleaſed, unite himſelf to a creature, and unite the creature to himſelf, in what degree of nearneſs he pleaſed, has nothing near ſo wonderful in it, I might ſay ſo incredible, as, what we all profeſs to believe in creation, viz. giving being to the whole univerſe, when there was nothing either to work upon or to work by, and ſupporting every order of creatures in the ſtations he ſaw fit to place them in.

When the Apoſtle ſays, he was made of a woman, or became one of us of or by a woman, without any mention of a man, no body will need be told, that he

refers

refers to the whole of his miraculous conception, and birth, by which he was diſtinguiſhed from all the common deſcendents of Adam; and thus was in his birth, as well as through the whole of his life, holy, harmleſs, and undefiled; perfectly ſeparate from ſinners: and a very little reflection will ſatisfy us, that he meant, by this expreſſion, to carry us back to what was the origin and ſubſtance of all the promiſes God ever made to mankind, viz. That ſhe whom Satan had deceived, ſhould have a ſeed which ſhould deſtroy him, and his works together. And thus he deduces the promiſe from the very beginning of the world, down to the time it was punctually performed in Jeſus Chriſt; "in whom all the promiſes are yea, and in "him amen;" the whole of the bleſſing being lodged in his hand.

What he adds here, of his being *made under the law*, which we obſerved was a neceſſary conſequence of his being born among the Jews, and thereby becoming one of thoſe who were under the law, in all the views that can be taken of it, this leaves no room for any queſtion, what that law was; and yet there have been many diſputes

putes about it; and how far, and in what reſpects, Chriſt was ſubject to it. Theſe I have no mind to enter into: as it is plain, that it was the ſame law which the Apoſtle had been ſpeaking of, the law which held him, and all his countrymen, in bondage, as children under age, and ſhut up into the faith of Chriſt, as it was revealed, and ſet in a fair light at the time he wrote; even that law from the bondage of which, and particularly its curſe, Chriſt came to redeem them, and buy them up. This laſt circumſtance hath determined ſome of the moſt judicious commentators to carry this higher, viz. to the original law given to Adam, and the ſanction or curſe annexed to it; and indeed to every tranſgreſſion of the law of creation, that is, every ſin whatſoever.

As to the law given to Adam, I mean the poſitive law about the forbidden fruit, it had a penalty annexed to it, and was fully executed in the true intent and meaning of it, which is certainly beſt gathered from the ſentence given upon the tranſgreſſors, by the lawgiver himſelf. There we find the earth was curſed for the man's ſake; but it is not ſaid that he himſelf was curſed:

curſed: but the ſentence concludes with binding him down to return to the duſt from which he was taken. There were, beſides this poſitive law, a ſet of duties, naturally ariſing from the benefit of being and life received from the creator's hand, very properly called *the law of creation*. If this be what our learned men mean by the *law of nature*, which ſuch a noiſe is made about, they would meet with no oppoſition; for it is founded in the natural relation between the creator and the creature. But then it muſt be remembered, that this law was never left to ſtand alone, but immediately on the entrance of ſin, was incorporated with the promiſe of a better life, inſtead of that which ſin had deſtroyed; and all the duties of it inforced, if not by ſtronger, yet by more intereſting, motives, which the Apoſtle here lays to our hand. Theſe were all of them taken in; and the promiſe laid at the foundation, in the law of Moſes, in theſe remarkable words, by which it was introduced, "I am Jehovah, "thy God;" which includes every thing.

Having had occaſion to ſay ſo much on our bleſſed Lord's redeeming his people from

from the *curſe of the law*, by being made *a curſe for them*, we may paſs on to the conſequences of our Lord's being thus brought under the law, and its curſe, which, he ſays, was *to redeem* or buy up thoſe who were in bondage to it. Only it may be worth obſerving, how the Apoſtle riſes in his views: he lays before them, and brings on the light in which he wanted they ſhould ſee it, by degrees, "like the morning light, which ſhines more "and more unto the perfect day," Prov. iv. 18.: and it is indeed the path of the righteous. He begins with what might ſeem a remote proſpect, viz. the promiſe and bleſſing of Abraham; he proceeds to their deliverance from the curſe of the law, by Jeſus Chriſt the ſeed to whom the promiſe was made; and here he carries it up to a deliverance from the law itſelf, as being of no more uſe to the Jews themſelves, now that the end of it was attained. It was a comfortable view he gave both of Jews and Gentiles, as *heirs of the promiſe*; but now he carries it up to the fulfilment, they were *children and heirs of God in Chriſt*.

Thus we find, that the Son of God when

when he came into the world *to redeem thoſe who were under the law*, the gracious deſign was not purely to free them from the bondage they were held under by it: Had they been left there, it is hard to ſay what their condition would have been. The buying them up from under the law was by no means deſigned to leave them to the dreadful conſequences of a lawleſs liberty, which might have had worſe conſequences, if poſſible, than that bondage from which they were freed: it was, that they might be put into a ſtate where their conduct was to be directed by another ſort of law, which this ſame Apoſtle calls *the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus*: it was, that they might receive what could not be received by the law of Moſes, *that they might receive the adoption of ſons.*

He muſt be a very ſuperficial reader who can paſs this without obſerving the ſtrength of the Apoſtle's expreſſion, that all that is left to us for obtaining this ſonſhip, is, to receive it as God gives it in his Son, as a free gift of ſovereign grace. The voice of the goſpel, as our Lord himſelf preached it, is, "All things are ready,

" come to the marriage," Matth. xxii. 4.; or, as the Prophet Iſaiah proclaimed long before, " buy wine and milk without mo-" ney, and without price," Iſaiah lv. Nothing but come, and take what God has kindly prepared at ſuch an immenſe expence, as the life and blood of his own beloved Son. And ſtrange, very ſtrange it is, (our Lord himſelf marvelled at it), that periſhing ſinners will not come to him that they may have life; that they may have it too in ſuch an endearing way, by receiving the adoption of ſons.

Adoption is a term very well known among men. It is taking a ſtranger into one's family, and inſtating him in all the relations, rights, and privileges of a ſon born of one's own body. It never was, nor can be, diſputed, that this is an act of mere grace and favour, whatever the merits and worth of the adopted perſon might be; and they may be ſuch as may bring greater honour to the adopter than him who is adopted. But this is far from being the caſe of thoſe who are made ſons and children of God. So far from having any thing amiable about them, that of all the creatures of God, devils only excepted,

cepted, they are the baſeſt and vileſt, the moſt fooliſh and the moſt wretched, and the only creatures ſunk into ſuch perverſeneſs, as to be enemies to that God unto whom they owe every thing. Surely if there is any mercy ſhown to ſuch, it muſt be pure ſovereign grace; and ſuch love as is no where to be found but in him who is love, and can pitch his love on what object he pleaſes.

Whatever the circumſtances of the adopter may be, it is the higheſt evidence any man can give of love to the perſon whom he thus brings into his family; but the higher the rank and dignity of the adopter, and the larger the inheritance, ſo much greater is the advantage the ſtranger makes by being thus connected with the family. This ſets the adoption, and ſonſhip which the Apoſtle here ſpeaks of, in a light greatly above human conception in our preſent ſtate. Were it no more than the love which God has ſhown in this aſtoniſhing favour, though we were to make no more by it, the privilege is ineſtimable: And the Apoſtle John refers us to this very thing, to take the meaſure both of the truth and

reality, the intenſeneſs and perfection of the love of God: 1 John iii. 1. "Behold, "what manner of love the Father hath be- "ſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be call- "ed the children of God:" and ſurely that is the higheſt honour, the moſt ſupereminent dignity a creature can poſſibly be inveſted with; and in compariſon of which the higheſt dignities and honours on earth are mere baubles, ſuch trifles as are not worthy to be named along with this.

But the God of truth does not put off thoſe whom he allows the title of *ſons* to, with bare names and titular honours. Whomſoever he honours with the title of *ſons*, he makes really ſuch. Men can give ſtrangers all the rights and privileges, but cannot give them the hearts and ſpirits of children: whereas the Apoſtle aſſures us, verſ. 6. that whoever have received this adoption, have at the ſame time *the Spirit of his Son*, his own well-beloved Son, *ſent into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father*. Abba, every one knows, is the ſame with that which ſignifies *father* in Greek. That there muſt be ſome reaſon for the Apoſtle's uſing that Hebrew word, when deſcribing the adopted ſon's addreſs to his heavenly Father,

Father, thoſe who are acquainted with the uſage of words among the Hebrews give us a good one. *Abbi*, my father, was a title of reſpect and honour; and commonly uſed in addreſſing ſuch as were thought worthy of ſuch reverence. But *Abba* was never made uſe of, unleſs to, or ſpeaking of, one's natural father. And thus the Apoſtle tells us, that they who are adopted, and have the Spirit of the Son given them, addreſs their great creator as their own father. And there is this ſpecial reaſon for it, that though adoption is a mere act of grace, it never goes alone; for all who ſhare in the privilege are really and truly born of God. Thus our Lord told Nicodemus, "that they are "born of the Spirit," John iii. Thus the Evangeliſt John i. 13. "that they are born, "not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, "nor of the will of man, but of God." And to mention no more, the Apoſtle Peter ſays expreſsly, "they are made partakers of "the divine nature," 2 Peter i. 4.

Thus the Apoſtle has carried every believer in Chriſt as high as a creature can poſſibly go. They are all the children of God: and we need no more but a view of

of the proviſion made for the children of the family. And this the Apoſtle gives us, verſ. 7. they are no more ſervants but children; *and if children, then heirs of God.* The Apoſtle makes the ſame concluſion, Rom. viii. 17. And it muſt be ſo: for we ſhall ſee by and by, that the inheritance is of ſuch a nature that it cannot admit of a partition; ſo that all the children are joint heirs of the whole, one as well as another.

They are *heirs of God.* How can this be? ſay the wiſe men of the world. God cannot die, and how then can he have heirs? Not as men have, that we may be very ſure of: but even in this view, if we remember what was ſaid upon a teſtament, and how the conveyance of the inheritance is made by Jeſus Chriſt, the original and natural heir, Heb. i. 2. this can be no objection, as it imports no more but the way the great proprietor of all has choſen and appointed.

But when the Apoſtle tells us, that all the children are heirs *of God*, it will be found, that he intends to direct us to the inheritance itſelf, wherein it lies, and whence the heirs are ſupplied with the ſuſtenance,

ſuſtenance, and all the comforts of life, ſo as neither the one nor the other ſhall ever fail. The whole creation cannot furniſh out ſuch a proviſion: nor is it any where to be found, but in the fullneſs and all-ſufficiency of the eternal creator. Could we know how unembodied ſpirits live, we would ſee the thing. They cannot live on groſs material food as we do: and yet they are no more ſelf-ſufficient, or capable of having life in themſelves, than we are; and there is nothing beyond the creature to live on, but the ſame power of God which gave being. Thus they may, with great propriety, be ſaid to live on God; with greatly more propriety then we can be ſaid to live on our daily food. And thus we find the end of all that Chriſt did and ſuffered, was to bring his people to God; and when that was done, the work was finiſhed.

But the way that pure ſpirits live, we can form no direct notion of; nor ſhall we ever be able to do it, until we are fitted for ſeeing face to face, and knowing even as we are known. And yet right Chriſtians, the ſons and children of God, live on him as really, though not ſo ſenſibly,

ſibly, as they do. The Pſalmiſt underſtood it right, Pſal. xvi. 5. "Jehovah is the "portion of mine inheritance, and of my "cup." And thus we find all the Old as well as New Teſtament believers lived; as much in dependence and confidence on God, as the men of the world do on ſenſible ſupports. It is true, they walk by faith, not by ſight: but when we conſider the foundation which faith ſtands on, the one is as real and as ſure as the other. Our Lord gives us a fine image of it in his eaſy familiar way, which falls every day under our obſervation. It is that of little children, who neither can nor care to do any thing for themſelves; yet live quite eaſy, by a perfect confidence of faith in their parents; and never fail of competent proviſion, ſo far as their fathers abilities go.

But at the ſame time that we are never to loſe ſight of the free ſovereign grace of God, and his aſtoniſhing love and kindneſs to man, we muſt be very careful to keep Jeſus Chriſt as conſtantly in view; as without him, neither the one nor the other can be ſeen in their full ſtrength and endearing beauty. The Apoſtle will not

ſuffer

ſuffer us to forget him: for when he has carried the Chriſtian as high as a creature can be carried, to be a child, an heir of the inheritance, an heir of God, who is the very ſubſtance of the ſpiritual world, he tells us, it is *through Jeſus Chriſt*. By him all the bars that ſtood between God and us were removed; by him a ſure foundation was laid for our faith and hope in God; and by him a new and living way was opened into the holieſt; a way that infallibly leads to a throne of grace. In him all the fullneſs of grace ſufficient for the very worſt of ſinners in the moſt deſperate-like caſe that a creature can poſſibly be in, dwells; and through this ſame Jeſus all Chriſtians "have acceſs to the "Father by one Spirit;" the Spirit of the Son, given to all the children of God.

CHAP. iv. 8. —— 18.

8. *Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did ſervice unto them which by nature are no gods.* 9. *But now after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye deſire again to be in bondage?* 10. *Ye obſerve days, and months, and times, and years.* 11. *I am afraid of you, leſt I have beſtowed upon you labour in vain.* 12. *Brethren, I beſeech you, be as I am; for I am as ye are: ye have not injured me at all.* 13. *Ye know how through infirmity of the fleſh, I preached the goſpel unto you at the firſt.* 14. *And my temptation which was in my fleſh ye deſpiſed not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.* 15. *Where is then the bleſſedneſs you ſpake of? for I bear you record, that if it had been poſſible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.* 16. *Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?* 17. *They zealouſly affect you, but not well; yea, they would exclude you, that you might affect them.* 18. *But it is good to be zealouſly affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am preſent with you.*

THE Apoſtle having ſaid what he thought proper for convincing the Galatians of the abſurdity of the new doctrine which they were in ſuch danger of being ſeduced by, and plainly demonſtrated that the goſpel of Chriſt had done what was

was abſolutely impoſſible for the law to do, and indeed done all, by bringing them to Chriſt, and by him as near to God as any creature could be, proceeds now to apply the principles he had laid down to their particular caſe. But being aware, that the Gentiles who ſeem to have been the great majority of theſe churches, might ſay, they never were in bondage to the law of Moſes, and that however the Jews might find themſelves obliged to Chriſt for their deliverance from the bondage and curſe of it, they could owe him nothing on that ſcore, he tells them, that they were under a greatly worſe bondage than they. The bondage of the Jews was but like that of a ſchoolmaſter or governor; and all for their good, to lead them to that only way by which they could come to the poſſeſſion of the inheritance. Whereas they *did not ſo much as know God*; and were held in bondage *or did ſervice to thoſe who by nature were no gods*, but had the name given them; and were put in the place of the only true God, by ignorant and miſtaken men. They were without Chriſt, ſtrangers to the promiſe, and therefore without hope, and without God in the world; and, to ſay all in

one word, dead in treſpaſſes and ſins: For thus he deſcribes the Epheſian Gentiles, Eph. ii.; and though he is not ſo particular with regard to the Galatians, yet the general charge comprehends the whole.

They *ſerved* thoſe which were no gods. The word the Apoſtle uſes here is never applied to a hired ſervant, or any perſon but ſuch as are bond-ſlaves, and abſolutely their maſter's property. He does not ſay, they were formally ſlaves to thoſe things which they ſerved as gods; becauſe many of them had no exiſtence, but were the mere creatures of fancy; and ſuch as had a real being, the ſun, moon, and the fabric of the heavens, were incapable of *claiming* any ſervice of them; and as little were they capable of doing them any good. But by the accounts we have of their ſervices in the Old-Teſtament hiſtory, and other good authors, the bondage muſt have been terrible, that could drive them into ſuch acts of barbarity, as we find were practiſed in what they called their *religious worſhip*. And ſo numberleſs were their waſhings, purifications as they called them, ſacrifices, and other rites and ceremonies, in their worſhip

ſhip of their different imaginary gods, that their ſervice was rather more burdenſome under their ſuperſtition, than that of the Jews to the true God.

It cannot eſcape any one's obſervation, who has at all reflected on it, that there is a very remarkable ſimilarity in the fundamentals of the Jewiſh, and Heathen worſhip, though the laſt was miſerably corrupted by the ſuperſtitious additions made by men who had a turn to ſerve by them, as the Chriſtian religion itſelf has been, in ſpite of the glaring light which ſhines forth in the record we have in our hands. Reaſon could never ſuggeſt, that their ſacrifices and purifications were proper, much leſs neceſſary means for putting away ſin. Their philoſophers and wiſe men condemned them as much as they durſt. But they kept their ground in ſpite of all that reaſon had to ſay againſt them; an argument the ſtrongeſt that can be in ſuch a caſe, that they muſt have been originally eſtabliſhed by a very high, and even a divine authority. And ſuch authority they were believed to have had, when men had loſt the knowledge of their true author.

Thence

Thence we may be in caſe to make a good account of what might ſeem ſtrange in the charge the Apoſtle brings againſt the Gentiles, that *they deſired again to be in bondage to* what he calls *weak and beggarly elements* or rudiments. It was the rites of the law of Moſes they were tempted to ſubmit to: theſe they had never been ſubject to; and therefore could not, in propriety of language it might be thought, be ſaid to *return to them again:* But they had been long accuſtomed to a ſet of rites of the ſame kind, and held as much in bondage under them as the Jews were. So long as they knew no better, and were ignorant of the true God, and what they had either to hope or fear from him, ſomething may be ſaid for them: God winked at thoſe times of ignorance: but now that they knew the truth, better things might be very juſtly expected of them. *They knew God, or rather were known of him.*

There is a great buſtle made among ſome modern commentators about a thing they call a *Paronomaſea*, where the ſame word, by the change of a letter or ſyllable, is repeated in different ſenſes; a figure

figure of ſpeech which, they ſay, this Apoſtle was extremely fond of. I will not eaſily believe, that a man of his good ſenſe, and directed as he was by the divine Spirit, would play with words, as affected rhetoricians do, to tickle the ears of their audience. Sure I am there is no ſuch thing here; but a plain declaration of an important truth, in the fitteſt and moſt proper terms. When he had ſaid, they *now knew God*, had he ſaid no more they might have been heedleſs enough to overlook the way in which they came by that knowledge, and value themſelves on the attainment, as our wiſe men do now; who tell us, that by the mere dint of their extraordinary penetration, and what they call the light of nature, they are able to diſcover, not only the being, but all the powers and perfections of God, with ſuch exact certainty, that they can tell, with the utmoſt aſſurance, what becomes him, and what doth not, nay, what he may and muſt do, and what he may not.

The Apoſtle was of the ſame mind with his divine maſter, "that no man knoweth "the Father, but the Son, and he to "whom he will manifeſt him." He had manifeſted

manifeſted him to theſe Galatians, by that goſpel which he ſent them by Paul's hands. To him therefore belonged all the honour: for had he not diſtinguiſhed them by that unmerited or rather ſovereign grace, they had been ſtill ſunk in the ſame ignorance and idolatry in which ſo many nations were left, who yet in all manner of natural abilities, and all the improvement the learning of theſe times could give them, were greatly above what they could pretend to. For when the world, with all their wiſdom, could not make out the knowledge of God, it pleaſed God, by a method which they reckoned fooliſhneſs, viz. the preaching of Chriſt and his croſs, to give the moſt ignorant infinitely fairer and fuller views than ever philoſopher could reach, with all his reaſoning powers.

But it was not bare ſpeculative knowledge the Apoſtle meant, either on God's ſide, or the Chriſtians. In this view, God knows all men, and all things alike; for nothing can be hid from his all-comprehending underſtanding. But for this ſort of knowledge, there is another word commonly uſed in the language the Apoſtle wrote in. The word he here uſes carries ſuch

ſuch ſuitable affection as has a native tendency to produce its proper effects; and is but faintly expreſſed by *acknowledgement*, the word commonly uſed in our language. And thus, when the Apoſtle ſays of the believing Galatians, that they *knew God* the loweſt meaning is, that they knew him ſo as to be convinced that he was really ſuch a God as he had declared, and ſhown himſelf to be in Chriſt Jeſus; and to own and acknowledge him accordingly; which cannot be done without a dutiful ſubmiſſion to him in all the dependence and confidence of love. This was enough to have founded a rebuke, even ſharper than that which the Apoſtle gives them. But when he carries it up to their being diſtinguiſhingly *known of God*, this naturally would lead them on to all the evidences he had given of his peculiar love and favour in Chriſt Jeſus; to all that he had done, and all that he had promiſed to do, for them, either on this ſide, or beyond the grave.

In this view they could not miſs to find themſelves provided, not only above their moſt extended wiſhes, but infinitely above what imagination itſelf could carry them:

" For eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, " nor hath it ever entered into the heart " of man to conceive, what God hath pre- " pared for them that love him;" for ſuch are provided in all the fullneſs of God. Thus his queſtion comes with redoubled force, *How turn you again to theſe weak and beggarly elements, to which you deſire again to be in bondage?* Every word has its weight. A bondage it certainly was; and that is a ſtate which no man will chuſe but on abſolute neceſſity. And there was no neceſſity in their caſe: ſo far from it, that they had every thing which creatures in their ſituation were capable of receiving. How abſurd then muſt it have been, to turn back to what was at beſt but the rudiments, to what they they had now attained; and ſuch too as could be of no manner of uſe to them? for they were *weak*, ſo weak that they could not at all profit thoſe who beſtowed all their labour on them, Heb. xiii. 9.; and ſo poor and *beggarly*, that they had nothing at all to give either one way or another: for after all the drudgery employed about them, the poor men were left nothing better; and it had been well, if they had not been made worſe, as the A-

poſtle

poſtle ſhows afterward they were to a very dangerous degree.

In this view of his reaſoning, I think we may find room for a word he uſes, and which our tranſlators have ſeen fit to leave out as ſuperfluous, viz. ανωθεν. This word is commonly uſed in the ſame ſenſe with παλιν, to ſignify *again*; and did it admit of no other meaning, it would indeed be ſuperfluous as it ſtands in this paſſage. But there is another well-known ſenſe of the word, viz. *from above*, or *from any high place* or *ſtation*, which perfectly ſuits the place he has ſet it in; and gives both additional ſtrength and beauty to his queſtion, as theſe Galatians could not deſcend to that baſe ſervitude, without coming down from the height God had raiſed them to.

The reaſon the Apoſtle gives for his apprehenſions about them, verſ. 11. and which he carries ſo far as to be afraid that *he had beſtowed all the pains he had taken about them to no purpoſe*, deſerves the very ſerious attention of every Chriſtian. It was, verſ. 10. *that they obſerved days and months, and times and years.* If they were the Jewiſh obſervances he has here in his eye, (for perhaps they retained ſome of their old Heatheniſh ones, which they

might think had no harm in them); but if they were the Jewiſh ones, as is moſt likely, for theſe were what the Apoſtle was moſt apprehenſive about, they had certainly more to ſay for them than could ever be ſaid for any other obſervances which have been ſince brought into the Chriſtian church. They were once expreſsly appointed by God himſelf, the rightful proprietor of us, and of all our time and effects. And yet when the time was come which he had ſet for them to expire, and when the purpoſes he had appointed them for, were anſwered; inſtead of being acceptable ſervices, they became a very hurtful nuiſance; which the Apoſtle was apprehenſive would undo all he had done, and make his labour in vain. When therefore the bleſſed Son of God condeſcended to be made a curſe to redeem men from that bondage, it muſt, one would think, be a very criminal preſumption in any man, or ſociety of men, to bring thoſe whom he has ſet free, into another bondage of their own contriving. Indeed, could they bleſs and ſanctify their own inventions, as the Creator did the Sabbath at its firſt inſtitution, ſomething might be ſaid for them; but as that is not in man's power, they muſt be

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at leaſt as weak and beggarly as the Apoſtle ſays the other were; nor can they anſwer any purpoſe at all, but that very bad one, to divert men from the ſpirit and power of religion, and their dependence on the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus, to external and carnal ordinances and inſtitutions; which never did nor ever can profit thoſe who exerciſe themſelves in them; at beſt, they are unprofitable and dangerous. It ought however to be adverted to, that it may not only be allowable, but extremely proper, to keep up the memory of remarkable providences, even by anniverſary days of faſting or thankſgiving, provided theſe be not made parts of religion, or ſet on the ſame footing with divine ordinances.

But that the Galatians might not be induced by the great freedoms he had uſed with them, and particularly what he had ſaid laſt, to imagine, that his paternal tenderneſs for them was either gone, or much abated, by the unworthy treatment they had given him in his abſence, through the malicious inſinuations of his enemies, he addreſſes them in a very affecting manner, verſ. 12. *& ſeqq.*; and by putting them in mind of the great love they had formerly ſhown

ſhown him, takes the ſureſt way of regaining their affection, if there was any abatement of it; as it ſeems certain there was, at leaſt among numbers of them, who had ſuffered themſelves to be ſeduced by the aſſiduity and cunning of their new teachers.

He expreſſes much affection in his application to them. He addreſſes them with the endearing title of *brethren*; and that was the ſame as if he had told them, that whatever fears and jealouſies his love to them ſuggeſted, he ſtill regarded them as brethren, and thereby acknowledged them as real members of Chriſt's body, and children and heirs of God through him.

He likewiſe applies to them with great earneſtneſs, *beſeeching them to be as he was*. One who conſiders only the ſubject of the epiſtle, might be naturally enough led to think, he was beſeeching them to be of the ſame mind with him in theſe points of faith, from which they were in danger of being drawn off. And this might have been acquieſced in as the true meaning of the terms he uſes, were it not for what he adds to induce them to it, viz.

that

that he was as they were. Surely the Apoſtle was not of the ſame mind with them: it muſt therefore mean a conformity in brotherly love and affection. And theſe ſeem to have been the uſual terms for expreſſing it: For thus we find Jehoſaphat aſſuring Ahab of his cordial agreement with him, 1 Kings xxii. 4. "I am as thou "art," &c.; and in this ſenſe Paul could ſincerely ſay, he was as they were.

What he adds, *that they had not injured him at all*, contributes further to confirm this meaning; as it appears deſigned to remove a jealouſy they had too much ground for. They knew they had not treated him with that reſpect, which either his character as an apoſtle, or the kindneſs he had ſhown to them, deſerved. To remove ſuch apprehenſions, he ſays, they had not injured him at all, and of courſe had no reaſon to dread his reſentment. But then another difficulty ariſes, How Paul could ſay ſo? when they were upon the very point of concluding him, not only no true apoſtle, but moreover a teacher of erroneous and even damnable doctrine; as he muſt have been, had what the zealots for Moſes's law alledged

been

been true, viz. that without theſe obſervances no man could be ſaved. We need not have recourſe to any unknown circumſtances to account for this, nor even to the meaſures of Chriſtian forgiveneſs, in which there never was a greater proficient. Himſelf gives us what may be abundantly ſufficient for that purpoſe, 1 Cor. iv. 3. "He reckoned it a ſmall thing to be judged "of man's judgement;" ſo ſmall that he never thought it worth bringing into an account of any kind. And he had reaſon; for beſides the common privilege of every Chriſtian, "that all things ſhall work to-"gether for good to them," he carried his commiſſion from one who could well, and he was ſure would, ſupport him ſo effectually, that it ſhould never be in the power of man to do him any real injury, nor mar the deſigned ſucceſs of the goſpel in his hand. He might with great truth ſay of the oppoſition made to him in theſe churches, what he elſewhere ſays of his bonds and ſufferings for Chriſt, "that it "contributed to the furtherance of the "goſpel:" for unto this we are indebted for this excellent epiſtle, which has been of ſo great uſe to Chriſtians, and will continue

tinue to be so, as long as they have any occasion for such instruction.

Having thus introduced himself to the best advantage, he carries them back in the three following verses to a very interesting period, the time when he first brought them the good news of Christ, and eternal life in him. And news it was to them, such as they had never heard from all their philosophers, and such as were reputed the wisest of mankind: for the world by their wisdom were so far from knowing God, that as all other learning and knowledge increased, this decayed; until it pleased God, by the preaching of the gospel, which they reckoned foolishness, to save those who then believed in Christ.

As he on all occasions took special care, in the abundance of his labours and success, to ascribe all the glory to the grace and free unmerited favour of God, and assumed nothing to himself, even when he was at the highest of what he calls his boasting, he here sets himself in a very mean light. He speaks of his weakness on that occasion, and of what he calls *a temptation in his flesh*, which has made

ſome interpreters imagine, that he then laboured under ſome bodily ailment. If it was ſo, it muſt be a very idle employment to gueſs at it, when himſelf has given us no hint to encourage the inquiry. Nor indeed need we look for any more in it than what we find him often acknowledging, that there was nothing in his outward appearance, either as to his perſon or addreſs, that ſhould recommend him; but rather the contrary; inſomuch as it gave occaſion to ſay, that *his bodily preſence was contemptible*, 2 Cor. x. 10. which was ſo far from unfitting, that it made him the fitter inſtrument for almighty power to work by, and which himſelf was ſo ſenſible of, that he openly declared, that if he was to glory or boaſt in any thing, it ſhould be in his infirmities, that the ſtrength of Chriſt might be made manifeſt in him, 2 Cor. xii.

And perhaps we ſhall not be much miſtaken, if we ſhould conclude, that this was the very temptation which he ſays was in his fleſh; the natural conſequence of which was, to be deſpiſed and rejected, as one from whom nothing was to be expected. But, to the praiſe of the glory of

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ſovereign grace, and the higheſt commendation that could be given the Galatians, they were ſo far from deſpiſing, that *they received him as an angel of God, even as Chriſt Jeſus.* Perhaps we ſhould come nearer the Apoſtle's intention, if we ſhould take the word our tranſlators render *angel*, in the ſenſe it bears in common language, that they received him as *the meſſenger* of God, as indeed he was; and thus the whole period will run exactly parallel to that wherein he ſets forth himſelf and his fellow-apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt, as *ambaſſadors for God, and addreſſing men, as though God himſelf did beſeech them, praying them in Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God,* 2 Cor. v. 20. When therefore the Galatians received the Apoſtle as the meſſenger of God, addreſſing them in Chriſt's ſtead, they muſt, as he ſays, receive him as they would have done Jeſus himſelf, had he appeared perſonally among them. Nay, what is more, in receiving him, they really received Chriſt; for his whole buſineſs was, to preach to them the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and thus to engage their hearts to him: An excellent piece of inſtruction, both to preachers and hearers.

To the preacher, to ſpeak as the meſſenger of God, declaring the teſtimony of God concerning his Son; and to the hearers, to hear as if Chriſt himſelf was preſent to receive their anſwer to his meſſage. And ſo he certainly is, whether we mind him or not: for he ſaid in expreſs terms, Matt. xviii. 20. *Where-ever two or three are gathered together in my name*, he does not ſay, there I will be, in the way of a promiſe, but expreſs aſſeveration, *there I am in the midſt of them.*

When Philip preached Chriſt to the Samaritans, and many believed, the divine hiſtorian remarks, that there was great joy in that city. No doubt there was ſuch joy among the believing Galatians: and by the words of our tranſlation, verſ. 15. the Apoſtle was upbraiding them with it, and a very bitter upbraiding it would have been, had theſe been his words, *Where is then the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of?* But moſt certainly they are not his words. It muſt be obſerved, that the word tranſlated *bleſſedneſs* has quite a different meaning. It ſignifies the act of one bleſſing another; and his words, in the plain literal ſenſe are, *What was then your bleſſing?*

bleſſing? It might naturally be conſtructed, of their bleſſing God and Chriſt for the wonderful grace and love manifeſted to them; and it is not to be thought they were wanting in this natural expreſſion of their gratitude and love. But it is evident, that their *bleſſing*, the expreſſion of their great love and affection, was tendered to the Apoſtle, *as the meſſenger of God to them.* And it appears to have been very great indeed; for he teſtifies for them, that *had it been poſſible, they would have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them to him.*

No body, I dare ſay, needs be told, what impreſſions the remembrance of ſuch happy moments muſt have made upon every heart which was not quite hardened againſt all the tender feelings of humanity; and how much ſtronger they muſt have been on ſuch as were ſoftened by grace, and the knowledge and belief of the love of Chriſt, and his heavenly Father, who ſent him to be the Saviour of the world. And now the queſtion comes with redoubled force, *Am I therefore become your enemy, becauſe I tell you the truth?* How tenderly does he touch the place he knew was very ſore! He does

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not ſay, they looked upon him as their enemy, but puts a queſtion to them; and even that not in ſuch ſtrong terms as our tranſlation does; which is rather a paraphraſe than a tranſlation. His queſtion may be very literally rendered ſo as to expreſs very ſtrongly the impoſſibility of his being their enemy; and that certainly agrees beſt with the pains he had taken to aſſure them, that *he was as they were*, their cordial and ſincere friend; ſo they once took him to be, and had expreſſed their ſenſe of it in the warmeſt manner. He was the ſame perſon ſtill, ἀληθευων, *dealing truly* and uprightly with them; for that, and not telling the truth, is the proper meaning of the word. And thus the queſtion will ſtand, Can I have become your enemy, while I am treating you in the integrity and uprightneſs of truth itſelf? It appears by what follows, that he had the falſe teachers in view, who had treated them in quite a different manner. As their profeſſed intention was to draw them off from the truth as it is in Jeſus, which Paul had taught them, ſo they made no ſcruple to employ the baſeſt means, by falſe ſuggeſtions, to prejudice them againſt him,

him, and even to perſuade them, that he was their moſt dangerous enemy. Thus he brings them in, verſ. 17. in a ſeemingly abrupt manner, without ſaying who they were whom he was ſpeaking of. But he needed not. The queſtion he had put in the foregoing verſe directed them ſufficiently to the perſons he meant, viz. thoſe who had made it their buſineſs to alienate their minds from him, that they might have them all to themſelves.

Our tranſlation gives what the Apoſtle ſays of them by much too faintly: *they zealouſly affect you, but not well*; and perhaps there are no words to be found in our language, to expreſs his meaning with the ſame ſtrength and conciſeneſs. The word *zeal*, as it is uſed in our language, though near the original in ſound, and taken from it, yet does not come up to the full import of the verb; which not only ſignifies a very warm affection, but is applied not only to kind and beneficent affections, but the very contrary, emulation, envy, and even hatred itſelf; and one of the moſt common uſes the verb is applied to, is, to expreſs the moſt earneſt application to gain one's favour, good will,

will, and love. And nearly in this ſenſe the Apoſtle ſeems to have applied it to the Judaizers; who, as appears by the following verſe, wanted by all means to engage the Galatians on their ſide.

It will readily be allowed, that it is ſo far from being a fault, that it is a very commendable character, to exert one's ſelf, even with the greateſt warmth of zeal, in all thoſe good offices which can recommend him to others. And the Apoſtle would never have blamed thoſe men for what himſelf, on all occaſions, recommended with the greateſt earneſtneſs. The Apoſtle allows it in the very next verſe, and pronounces it to be good to be thus affected to what is really good. But there may be a bad, as well as a good zeal, as the matter it is employed in, or the manner in which it is conducted, is either good or bad.

I know not on what conſideration our tranſlators have inſerted the particle *but* into the firſt clauſe of the verſe, where it is not; and have changed it in the ſecond into another of a different ſignification. By the inſertion, they have divided what ſtands a very ſhort ſentence into two; and

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make the Apoſtle, implicitly at leaſt, to approve the zealous affection of the falſe teachers, and to blame only their not managing it well: Whereas he condemns the whole of it, as there was nothing of it right or good, either in matter or manner. He in effect ſays, the zeal of theſe men about you is not good; and he proves it in the next clauſe by this, that it was all to gain their own very bad ends; and he tells very roundly, in the concluſion of the epiſtle, what theſe ends were, chap. vi. 12. 13.

There is a different reading in the ſecond clauſe of the verſe, which makes a conſiderable variation in the ſenſe. This difference lies only in two letters, which might eaſily be miſtaken by inattentive tranſcribers, viz. ν & μ. Interpreters and critics are divided, whether ὑμᾶς *you*, or ἡμᾶς *us*, is the authentic reading. Our tranſlators, with many others, have choſen the firſt; and thus the words run, They would exclude you, that *you* might affect *them*. *Excluding* is a relative term; and the Apoſtle does not ſay from what. But that may be naturally enough ſupple-

mented from the context; and at the ſame time it will appear, how they gained their end by it. Could they have prevailed with the Galatians to be circumciſed, the ſame bleſſings they gave to *Paul*, when he brought Chriſt and eternal life to them, would naturally fall upon *them* for making that neceſſary ſupplement to his doctrine. This however could not be done without ſo far renouncing, and thus being *excluded* from Chriſt. But this theſe blind guides did not regard.

This ſets the attempt of theſe ſeducers in the moſt terrible light; but it is no more than what Paul himſelf had laid before them in this epiſtle. And very neceſſary it was, that the thoughtleſs men who were ſo ready to fall into the ſnare, might be appriſed of their danger. But however this might be, the promoters of that ſyſtem had ſenſe enough to perceive, that Paul ſtood in their way; and ſo long as the Galatians retained their firſt affection to him, and reverenced him as the Apoſtle of Chriſt, and particularly his meſſenger to them, it would be impoſſible to carry the point they aimed at; and therefore

made

made their first attack upon him, as we had occasion to observe before on the Apostle's vindication, chap. i. & ii. And thus he might very pertinently say, that all the zeal they put on for the Galatians, was but an attempt to exclude *him*, and secure the affections of the Galatians to *themselves*. This is so much to the purpose the Apostle had in view, and comes in so naturally on what he had been saying of the very great affection the Galatians had shown to him, that some of the most judicious interpreters have been determined to chuse the second reading, *us* instead of *you*.

But, after all, whatever it might have been to the Galatians, it is of very little moment to us which of the two readings should stand in this text, unless it be to put us upon our guard against those who lie in wait to deceive, and to set a mark upon those who make no scruple to attack the characters of men as good, if not better than themselves, when they stand in their way; a practice generally disclaimed, but, alas! as generally practised. The Apostle's decision on the case before him is a good one, and will hold in every other case:

It is good to be zealouſly affected in a good thing, or *in what is good*; this takes in both men and things; and, leaving the Apoſtle's word, as he has placed it, undetermined to either, makes it altogether unneceſſary to enter into the reaſons which have induced ſome very learned men to think that Paul here, in a very elegant manner, ſets *himſelf* before the Galatians as the *good man* toward whom they were to be zealouſly affected. But the Apoſtle, they ſhould have obſerved, changes the phraſe he had uſed, when ſpeaking of perſons; and inſtead of zealouſly affecting them, he ſays, it is good to be zealouſly affected *in good*; which takes in the whole ſubject their zeal is to be employed in. What he adds of being ſo *always, and not only when he was preſent with them*, has been thought to point directly to Paul's perſon, whom they had poured ſo many bleſſings on when preſent. But on comparing Phil. ii. 12. it will appear, that this expreſſion is as applicable to the whole duties of Chriſtianity, as to this or any other particular. The Apoſtle had no ends of his own to ſerve by beſpeaking their affection; and as the caſe then ſtood,

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the cauſe of Chriſt and his were the ſame; and though he was one very proper object of their zeal; yet was he neither the only, nor even the principal one. It is likewiſe to be obſerved, that he had but juſt in the preceding verſe taxed the pretended zeal of their new teachers for their good; and pronounced it wrong, or not rightly and fairly managed, either as to matter or manner: on which it was very natural to give them a general direction for the right management of their own zeal, which ſhould hold whether he was preſent or abſent.

And happy were it for the Chriſtian world, if this rule were punctually obſerved. In reading the hiſtory of the church, it will be hard to ſay, whether what has gone, and ſtill goes, under the name of *zeal*, has done moſt good or hurt to true religion? When regularly conducted by the Apoſtle's rule, it is the fervour of love to God and man, the very beſt thing: but how readily does it degenerate into that which the Apoſtle blames in the Judaizers, *zeal for a party*; and that again into what the ſame Greek word is often uſed to denote, the *very bittereſt enmity*; which naturally leads to what we find the Apoſtle

poſtle cautioning theſe Galatians againſt, chap. 5. verſ. 15. *biting and devouring one another*; all which would be avoided were it confined to what is good, whether perſons or things.

CHAP. iv. 19. —— 31.

19. *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Chriſt be formed in you.* 20. *I deſire to be preſent with you now, and to change my voice, for I ſtand in doubt of you.* 21. *Tell me, ye that deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* 22. *For it is written, that Abraham had two ſons; the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman.* 23. *But he who was of the bond-woman, was born after the fleſh: but he of the free-woman was by promiſe.* 24. *Which things are an allegory; for theſe are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.* 25. *For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and anſwereth to Jeruſalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children.* 26. *But Jeruſalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* 27. *For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren, that beareſt not; break forth and cry, thou that travaileſt not: for the deſolate hath many more children than ſhe which hath an huſband.* 28. *Now we, brethren, as Iſaac was, are the children of promiſe.* 29. *But as then he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even ſo it is now.* 30. *Nevertheleſs, what ſaith the ſcripture? Caſt out the bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of the bond-woman*

woman ſhall not be heir with the ſon of the free-woman. 31. *So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.*

THE Apoſtle being about returning to the main ſubject of this epiſtle, and having ſome very home things yet to ſay upon it, wiſely prepares them for it: firſt, by recalling, as we have ſeen, to their remembrance the happy time when he firſt preached Chriſt to them, which he concludes with the moſt pathetic intimation of his very great love to them; and next by a very entertaining, as well as inſtructive, application of the hiſtory of Abraham's two ſons, Iſaac and Iſhmael, to the caſe he was writing upon.

He finiſhes the very affecting view he was putting them in mind of, with one of the ſtrongeſt expreſſions that could be made of his great concern for their welfare, and the ardency of his affection to them, verſ. 18.; which one cannot let paſs without obſerving the ſtrong contraſt between the Jewiſh zealots, and himſelf. *They* were very buſy about them, and in all appearance affected with the greateſt warmth of zeal for their ſalvation, but with no better

better tendency, than to draw them off from Chriſt and his Apoſtle, and to bring them under that yoke of bondage which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, and from which Chriſt had redeemed and made them free. *His* views again were juſt the reverſe of theirs, even to bring them to Chriſt, and to maintain them in the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, by carrying them on to that perfection ſet forth in him. And his earneſt zeal for accompliſhing this great object, is ſuch as a tender and affectionate father feels for his little children, when he ſees them in danger of periſhing, or like the anguiſh of a woman in the pains of childbirth.

We need not ſtand on the addreſs he makes to them as *little children*. It carries great tenderneſs of affection in it; but has nothing ſingular, as it was the ordinary title by which the Apoſtles addreſſed the young converts to Chriſtianity. But when he ſtyles them "*my* little children," his affection to them, and their duty to him, are both ſet in the moſt affecting light, and could hardly miſs to ſtrike ſuch of them as liſtened to the new teachers, in a very ſenſible manner; eſpecially on what he adds,

adds, that as he had formerly begotten them in Chriſt by the goſpel, 1 Cor. iv. 15. he was now put to the ſame pains anew, through their folly and thoughtleſsneſs: for the word he uſes does not ſo properly ſignify travailing in childbirth, *i. e.* the actual bringing forth children, as the pains and ſorrows that attend it. Such were the feelings of this great apoſtle on this new emergency; the beſt pattern a goſpel miniſter can form himſelf upon, as Chriſt is the great pattern for a Chriſtian; his work is never done, nor his ſolicitude and pains at an end, until *Chriſt is formed in thoſe* under his care.

The expreſſion is ſtrong and bold: too bold the learned and wiſe men of the world have thought it; and much learned pains have been taken to bring it down to their ſtandard. The Apoſtle himſelf tells us, that though he did not ſpeak the wiſdom of this world, nor of the men of this world, that yet he ſpake wiſdom, and the wiſdom of God too, 1 Cor. ii. 6. 7. Nor may it be doubted that he ſpoke, as the apoſtles firſt preached, Acts ii. 4. "as the "Spirit gave him utterance." The loweſt conſtruction that the words, with all the help of figure and metaphor, can

be brought down to, is, their being formed into the image, and a thorough reſemblance of Jeſus Chriſt, the only proper ſtandard of all perfection and worth; an excellency not to be attained by ſtudying the morals of Epictetus, or Marcus Antoninus; nay, nor by copying out every virtue we can find in Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and forming ourſelves upon them: For all this, even ſuppoſing it could be done, would amount to no more than a ſyſtem of pure morality; and though it is impoſſible that any one can be a good Chriſtian without morality, yet the moſt perfect mere moral virtue, (if ſuch a thing could be on any other principles than the Chriſtian), would never make a Chriſtian; at moſt it could only be forming one's ſelf *on Chriſt*, which could in no ſenſe be called *forming Chriſt in them.*

They come ſomewhat nearer the Apoſtle's ſenſe, who explain it, by the true doctrine of the goſpel being firmly ſettled in their minds; (if by this they mean, the firm faith and belief of the teſtimony God has given, and the record he has made concerning his Son): for indeed where-ever that is found, the work the Apoſtle aims at is done,

done. But then it muſt be remembered, that however the goſpel of Chriſt is the mean by which the thing is done, yet it does it not in a merely rational or moral way, (tho' indeed the Chriſtian faith is the moſt rational thing in the world; juſt as rational as it is to believe, that the God of truth is not a liar or a cheat), but it doth it by the miniſtration of the Spirit. There are numberleſs inſtances of people very firmly of the Chriſtian opinion, and who cannot be reckoned either infidels or unbelievers, and yet their belief hath hardly ſo much influence on their hearts and ſpirits, as the faith of devils hath on them. Theſe indeed "believe, and tremble;" which is as far as the grounds of their belief can carry them. And the *dead faith*, as the Apoſtle James calls it, of theſe merely rational believers ſeldom goes further than to deſtroy theſe fears; while in all other reſpects it leaves them as much ſtrangers to Chriſt, and the buſineſs on which he came into the world, as thoſe who never heard of him.

We muſt therefore, of neceſſity, look further for the Apoſtle's meaning. Nor do we need to look far: he has it laid very fairly to our hands in this ſame epiſtle. They

who are Chriſtians indeed, have put on Chriſt. He is in them, and by him God himſelf is in them, and dwells in them as his living temples. Being thus united to the great fountain of life, they live by him; nay more, it is not ſo properly they that live, as Chriſt that liveth in them. They who are thus joined to him are *one ſpirit* with him; and one ſpirit argues one life, one mind, and one way of living. As I had formerly occaſion to diſcourſe upon this very intimate and aſtoniſhing union, I need ſay nothing further here, but only remind you of what is written, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "Examine yourſelves, whether you be in "the faith; prove yourſelves: know you "not your own ſelves, how that Chriſt is "in you, except you be reprobates?" And 1 John iv. 9. "In this was manifeſted the "love of God towards us, that he ſent his "only begotten Son, that we might *live by* "*him*;" who is emphatically ſtyled by him, John vi. 33. "the bread of God which came "down from heaven, and gives life to the "world." This is what makes the Chriſtian; and this only can do it: for Chriſt himſelf has aſſured us, "that unleſs we eat "the fleſh, and drink the blood of the Son

"of

"of God, we neither have nor can have "any life in us." And if our faith be not thus employed, and doth not anſwer this purpoſe, it is dead, and leaves the poor deluded man as dead as ever.

Such and ſo good was the Apoſtle's zeal for theſe Galatians. But they were behaving in ſuch a manner as made him very doubtful about them; and occaſioned all the pain he had endured when he was labouring for their converſion: for which cauſe, as we read, verſ. 20. *he was very deſirous to be preſent with them*; and very likely would have been with them had it been in his power. What hindered him he does not ſay; and if they knew, as probably they did, it was needleſs to mention it. But if he had come, he tells them he would have found it neceſſary *to change his voice* to them. The word the Apoſtle uſes does indeed properly ſignify the *voice*, by the different turns of which it may be ſuited to the ſubject it is deſigned to convey to the hearer. But it can hardly be thought, that Paul meant no more but changing the tone of his voice, unleſs there was likewiſe a change in the matter which he was to deliver; the phraſe therefore

therefore imports, that he intended to deal more roundly with them than he had yet done, even in this epiſtle: and if I miſtake not much, he executes his purpoſe very fully in the following chapter.

But before he enters upon that, he very wiſely prepares them for it, by accommodating a well-known piece of Old-Teſtament hiſtory to their caſe, as allegories are in uſe to be applied: for it is to be obſerved, that the Apoſtle does not ſay, verſ. 24. as our tranſlators do, that *theſe things are an allegory*; but that they are *allegoriſed*, or applied as that ſort of writing is deſigned to be, to point out ſomething quite different from what the words in their plain ordinary meaning are known to expreſs; ſuch as are all thoſe parts of Scripture which go by the name of *parables*. Our Lord made frequent uſe of them, and his are by far the moſt perfect; many of the ſame kind occur in the Old Teſtament, both in the hiſtorical and prophetical part of it.

But it has been ſaid, That theſe, as well as the inſtructive fables we have from merely human writers, are made for the purpoſe, and no body expects hiſtorical truth

truth in them. But as this of Abraham's two wives and two ſons is a piece of real hiſtory, it cannot, and ought not to be treated as allegory. Indeed it ought not: but ſhould be treated according to its real nature, as a piece of very true and undoubted hiſtory, and of very great moment too. But if what the Apoſtle tells us of the hiſtory of old Iſrael be true, (and it would have been true whether he had told us or not), "that theſe things were written for our inſtruction, upon whom the "ends of the world are come," the improving theſe facts in parallel caſes, for inſtruction and warning, is not making allegories or feigned ſtories of them, but putting them to their proper uſe. And thoſe who are at pains to underſtand the two caſes which are here compared and parallelled, will find them ſo exactly anſwering, that the Apoſtle had no manner of occaſion to do any more than he has done; that is, to ſtate them, and lay them ſo as to be ſeen together at one view.

The enemies of revelation, ignorant as as they chuſe to be of all theſe things, and ſuppoſing that the Apoſtle was here making an argument of the caſe of Iſaac and Iſhmael, and their two mothers, merely

on

on the footing of his allegorical application of it, have laviſhed a great deal of profane wit on the imagined abſurdity. Whereas it ſeems very plain, that the Apoſtle is not reaſoning at all, but ſeriouſly warning the Galatians againſt the danger they ſeemed running into, of being found in the ſame unhappy caſe with Iſhmael the ſon of the bond-woman, namely, *to be caſt out of God's family*, and deprived of the inheritance: for there we find he lands his diſcourſe, verſ. 30. In this light I muſt profeſs myſelf quite at a loſs to find out the reaſon of the great difficulties commentators profeſs to find in this diſcourſe, and of the deſperate methods bold critics have taken to correct the Apoſtle. The only real difficulty ariſes from three words in verſ. 25. which we ſhall afterwards meet with in obſerving how the Apoſtle adjuſts the parallel.

The Apoſtle introduces it in a manner that gives a pretty colourable reaſon to think, that the fact here referred to was, in the wiſdom of God, deſigned and recorded on purpoſe, to be applied and improved as the Apoſtle does here, and as the prophet Iſaiah, referred to verſ. 27. had done before him. By the *law* here, no body

body needs be told, that he means the whole five books of Moſes, according to the diviſion then (and I may ſay ever ſince) in uſe of the Old-Teſtament writings into the law and the prophets: *Ye who deſire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?* Had not the application of the hiſtory been ſo obvious before he ſaid any thing about it, much of the ſharpneſs of the queſtion would have been loſt. They might have anſwered as the Ethiopian eunuch did Philip, how could we apply it, until we had it allegorized to us, as you have done?

It is indeed very obvious, and ſuch as would readily occur to an attentive reader. The hiſtory is ſo well known, that we need not repeat here any more than the Apoſtle gives us; nor is it poſſible to ſay it better than he has done: *Abraham had two ſons; one by a ſlave or bond-woman, and another by a free.* But this was not the only difference. The ſon of the bond-woman was conceived and born *after the fleſh*, *i. e.* in the ordinary courſe as other children are, nor was there any one circumſtance to diſtinguiſh him. This was not the caſe of Sarah the free-woman.

The Apoſtle ſays ſhortly, "he was conceived and *born by promiſe*." He ſays it in one word; but it is a very comprehenſive one. He had ſaid much about it in the foregoing part of the epiſtle; which be ſure he needed not repeat particularly here. All this muſt be taken in, and indeed the whole hiſtory of Sarah's barrenneſs, until there was no poſſibility of his having a child any how but by the immediate power of God; and there could have been no reaſon ſo much as to hope for that, if God had not promiſed it.

Such a promiſe Abraham had; and he had it often repeated to him. But it was not barely the promiſe of a ſon, but attended with all the bleſſings a man could receive from God: for in that promiſe this apoſtle tells us, he had the goſpel preached to him. The caſe, as we have it left on record, appears to have been this. The proſpect given our firſt parents, on the firſt entrance of ſin, that the ſeed of the woman, who was firſt ſeduced, ſhould bruiſe the ſerpent's head, and thus deſtroy him and his works together, was in a manner loſt, when the righteous ſovereign deſtroyed man with the earth, and eſtabliſhed his *covenant*, that

(that is the original promiſe) with Noah. And it was the ſame covenant or promiſe that was eſtabliſhed with Abraham, which the Apoſtle calls *the announcing the goſpel to him*, "that in his ſeed all the families of "the earth ſhould be bleſſed."

But it was not for all his natural ſeed that the promiſe was intended, as the carnal Jews fondly imagined: and God gave timeous and early intimation of this in the caſe of Abraham's two ſons, Iſaac and Iſhmael, to the former of whom the promiſe was expreſsly confined; and ſtill more explicitly confirmed in the caſe of Jacob and Eſau, as the Apoſtle ſhows at large, Rom. ix. And in the virtue of this entail, as we may call it, the children of Abraham's faith, thoſe, namely, who are united to the one ſeed Chriſt, and not his natural deſcendents, are the true children and heirs of the promiſe, whatever family or nation they originally belonged to.

I need not ſtand to obſerve what the Apoſtle had taken ſuch pains to eſtabliſh, in the preceding part of the epiſtle, viz. that all who were under the law of Moſes, were under a moſt miſerable bondage, under

the curſe, and at beſt held in a condition liker ſlaves than children, until they were bought out from under it by Jeſus Chriſt, and brought into the glorious liberty of the ſons of God, in conſequence of the original promiſe. So that, upon the whole, one may ſay, that the caſe could not have been better illuſtrated than by what we have recorded of the two mothers, and their children, allegorized or accommodated to the two covenants or grants, the promiſe given to Abraham, and the law from mount Sinai.

Some have taken the liberty to ridicule the Apoſtle for ſaying, *theſe two women were the two covenants*; and others who dare not venture on ſuch groſs abuſe, yet have thought it an improper way of ſpeaking. If the Apoſtle knew not how to expreſs himſelf properly, certainly his maſter did. Let any one read the explication our Lord gave his diſciples of his parables, particularly thoſe of the ſower, and of the tares of the field, and he will find the Apoſtle well warranted to uſe the ſame terms, when applying a piece of true hiſtory in the parabolical or allegorical manner.

He

He begins with *Hagar*, and makes her repreſent the *covenant* or law given at *Sinai*, verſ. 24.; and gives the agreement or reſemblance in two words, that both bring forth their children *to bondage*, a point the hiſtory fixes in the caſe of Hagar; and which he had fully proved of the law of Moſes given at Sinai. In the following verſe he gives the reaſon more fully, but in terms which have put maſterly critics to very deſperate ſhifts to make out the ſenſe which they think the Apoſtle ought to have deſigned; not only tranſpoſing the particles δε & γαρ, but ſtriking out what they think ought not to be there, merely becauſe it does not comport with the ſenſe they want to faſten on the Apoſtle. Το γαρ Αγαρ is the grand difficulty, and is by many given up as abſolutely unintelligible. But had *Hagar* been a declinable word, and had the Apoſtle put it fairly in the genitive caſe, I dare ſay no body would have had any difficulty in fixing upon a very obvious ſenſe, and exactly ſuiting the Apoſtle's intention; which, as appears by the particle γαρ, wherewith he introduces it, was to aſſign the reaſon of his ſaying, that *Sinai*, or the law from Sinai, was *Hagar*.

gar. Thus the words, τὸ γὰρ Ἁγὰρ, will ſtand as a reference to her part in the hiſtory; and the whole verſe will run as if the Apoſtle had ſaid in our language, *As for Hagar*;—*Sinai is a mountain in Arabia:* but it *anſwers to*, or ſtands in the ſame rank with, *the preſent Jeruſalem, in bondage with her children.*

In this conſtruction the tranſlation is quite literal, except that there is nothing to anſwer the particle δὲ in the laſt clauſe. But thoſe who are but even moderately acquainted with the original language, muſt have obſerved the very extenſive uſe of that particle; and that very frequently it ſerves no other purpoſe, but to connect and diſtinguiſh the different clauſes of a ſentence; which appears to be its only uſe here, and which therefore our tranſlators have rendered *and.* And if we can but make out a good reaſon for making Sinai ſtand for the earthly Jeruſalem, and both be repreſented by Hagar the bond-woman, we will need no more to juſtify the accommodation, as the Apoſtle has ſtated it. And this, one would think, ſhould be no hard matter for any one who

can

can compare the caſe of Hagar and Iſhmael, with the then ſtate of Jeruſalem.

It would anſwer very little purpoſe to attempt making out a connection between Hagar and mount Sinai, and between that mountain, and thoſe on which Jeruſalem ſtood, which ſeveral very learned men have amuſed themſelves with. It is the *covenant* or *law* given at *Sinai* the Apoſtle pitches on as the ground of the accommodation he is making. To this law the Jewiſh nation, (commonly deſigned the children of Jeruſalem), owed, we may ſay, their very being: It was this that made them what they were, a peculiar people diſtinguiſhed from all the other nations in the world: and it was this law that brought and held them and their children in preciſely ſuch a ſtate of bondage as Hagar and her ſon Iſhmael were. And the Apoſtle evidently carries it no further: ſo that it ſeems but an idle amuſement ſome have beſtowed much labour in, to find the Arabians, the deſcendents of Iſhmael, in a ſtate of bondage.

There is ſome appearance of ambiguity in the laſt part of the verſe, as it is not clear in the words, whether it is Sinai

or

or Jeruſalem which the Apoſtle means to ſay are in bondage. But it is only an appearance, and may be certainly determined from the context; where Sinai, or rather the law given there, is the mother, bringing forth the early Jeruſalem and her children, all involved in the ſame bondage, by the ſervile condition of that mother, and thus exactly anſwering the caſe of Hagar and her ſon. Several other circumſtances might be obſerved wherein they agree: but as in parables and allegories every circumſtance is not deſigned to be applied particularly, but the ſcope of the whole muſt be attended to; ſo it is in true hiſtory when it is treated in that manner: To apply every minute circumſtance is abuſing and diſgracing the whole.

The Apoſtle having adjuſted Hagar the bond-woman's part, proceeds, verſ. 26. to the part of Sarah the free-woman, and her children. And as he had left the then Jeruſalem in the ſtate of the bond-woman, he directs us to another Jeruſalem, the Jeruſalem which is above, the ſame we find deſcribed, Rev. xxi. 2. *et ſeqq.* the new and holy Jeruſalem; and the ſame which the Apoſtle ſays the believing Hebrews

brews were then come to, Heb. xii. 22. "mount Sion, the city of the living God, "the heavenly Jeruſalem;" the ſame with theſe *heavenlies*, or heavenly places, which thoſe who are quickened and raiſed up with with Chriſt, are made to ſit in, or inhabit together with, and in him, Eph. ii. 6. And I hope no Chriſtian needs be told, that under theſe images is repreſented the ſtate of the kingdom of Chriſt, as manifeſted and managed by what we call *the goſpel*, the teſtimony of God concerning his Son, and the gift of eternal life. When Moſes was commanded to make the tabernacle, with all the furniture and utenſils belonging to it, he had a pattern ſhowed him, with a very ſolemn charge to ſee that he made all things exactly according to it. And there was great need of exactneſs: for it was deſigned to be a ſenſible repreſentation of the heavenly ſanctuary and true tabernacle, the figure of the good things to come; a ſhadow the ſubſtance of which was Chriſt.

That rigid ſchoolmaſter had it in commiſſion to keep even the children and heirs under a very ſevere bondage, until the ſeed ſhould come who had the promiſes. But

they muſt be egregiouſly miſtaken who imagine, that Chriſt came to ſet up a new religion, entirely different from, and even contrary unto the Jewiſh, at leaſt in many, and theſe the moſt material inſtances; a notion which many modern divines, and profeſſed defenders of the Chriſtian religion too, appear extremely fond of. But the meaſures of divine government, or, in other words, the conſtitution of grace revealed to our firſt fathers, Adam and Noah, and the promiſe and grant of grace made and confirmed by oath to Abraham, are unchangeable like their author; and could not be diſannulled by the law of Moſes given ſo many hundred years after, but were continued down in full force under it.

It is true, there was a baſtard Judaiſm in faſhion, when the Son of God came into the world, which ſtands in a direct oppoſition to the goſpel; and which, by leaving out the promiſe, made the law a dead, and, which is worſe, a killing letter. This brought the then Jeruſalem into bondage, ſuch as made it as abſolutely neceſſary that they ſhould be born again, as the Gentiles, who had nothing at all

to

to truſt to. The diſpenſation therefore of the Spirit is the life of the ſinner; and the life which that Spirit conveys, is the only way by which he can be entered into the ſpiritual world, or, which is the ſame thing, brought to God; and the only title any ſinner can have, is, the grant of ſovereign grace in the free promiſe.

In this ſame divine conſtitution, this ſovereign grant and promiſe, the church and kingdom of Chriſt, the ſpiritual and *heavenly Jeruſalem*, is founded; and the Apoſtle ſays, *ſhe is free*. There needs no words for the explanation of this, unleſs we ſhould run out into an account of all the kinds of bondage and liberty which we can have any notion of. But we may ſee as much as we have occaſion for, in the view the Apoſtle gives us of the eternal inheritance conveyed, and the poſſeſſion of it ſecured, by a free and irrevocable deed of gift; and it is true to a proverb, that nothing can be freer than a gift. Had the grant come, clogged with terms and conditions to a ſet of creatures who could do nothing, it would have been the ſame thing as if they had been honeſtly told,

they were to have nothing; and all the purpoſe that could have been anſwered, was, to deceive fools into a vain deluſive hope, which they would never have entertained had they been ſo wiſe as to conſider the extent of their own powers.

To be fully ſatisfied how juſtly the Apoſtle ſays, the Jeruſalem from above is *the mother of us all*, ſome of our acuteſt critics obſerve, that the Apoſtle here joins himſelf with the Gentiles; which they confirm from the following verſe; and conclude thence, that the little word *all* has crept in unwarrantably into the text, and ought to be ſtruck out, becauſe it takes in the Jews as well as Gentiles. Common ſenſe and reaſon would ſay there was no great harm in this, and that it is ſo far from marring, that it greatly ſupports the views he was inculcating. It ſets Jews and Gentiles both on a level, and implies that the Jews are not one jot advantaged by having the law of Moſes: for when a right to the inheritance enters the queſtion, they are forced to have recourſe to the ſame grant and promiſe, which the Gentiles had as free acceſs to as they; and on this he brings in the remarkable prophecy of Iſaiah, chap. liv. verſ. 1.

It

It has been alledged, and not without ſome good colour of reaſon, that our Apoſtle had this text in his eye, when he ſays, that what is recorded by Moſes of Hagar and Sarah was allegoriſed, or treated in this manner by the prophet Iſaiah. It muſt be acknowledged, that the very ſound of the prophet's words naturally bring the caſe of theſe two women to our minds. It cannot be doubted, that it was the Gentile church he addreſſes as a barren woman, who had continued long in that condition, and yet was to have many more children than the Jews whoſe huſband God had long declared himſelf to be, and whom that nation was very ſolemnly married to. And as he ſpeaks of them as two women well known in his time, it is certain that there are not two recorded in hiſtory whom the prophet's deſcription can ſuit in any degree ſo nearly as Sarah and Hagar; though it muſt be acknowledged on the other ſide, that there are ſome circumſtances in the prophet, that cannot eaſily be applied to Sarah, particularly that of a woman forſaken of her huſband, which ſhe never was, though indeed

indeed as to the main thing, the bringing forth children, ſhe was in the ſame caſe as if ſhe had been forſaken, and had no huſband, until the promiſe came, and Iſaac was born, when, by the common courſe of nature, the thing was impoſſible.

But be that as it may, the prophet's account of the barren woman ſuits the Gentiles, and the ſtate of Chriſt's kingdom among them, with the greateſt exactneſs in every point. God called them as a woman forſaken, and a wife of youth. They were early eſpouſed to him in the days of the fathers, Noah and his faithful deſcendents, and as really as the Jewiſh nation was afterward. They were long, very long forſaken, and left in the caſe of a *deſolate* woman, who of courſe could produce no children, until the promiſe came, and they were called into the kingdom and glory of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and then the children of the Jewiſh nation were but an handful, in compariſon of the Gentile Chriſtians.

So far the Apoſtle had ſtated the compariſon between the mothers, Hagar and Sarah on one ſide, and the Jewiſh and Chriſtian churches on the other; and as

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it was in this laſt claſs that the Galatians ſtood, viz. the children of the free woman, he proceeds, verſ. 28. to compare the children; and having ſaid enough of the bondage of the earthly Jeruſalem and her children, he begins with the parallel between Iſaac and the Gentile believers; particularly the Galatians, to whom he was writing, and compares them together as to their birth, and the conſequences of it, namely, their ſtation and right to the inheritance; all comprehended in their being *the children of the promiſe, as Iſaac was.*

The loweſt uſe we can make of this is to turn our attention to that part of ſcripture-hiſtory. Iſaac was the child of the promiſe on two accounts; firſt, it was in the virtue of the promiſe that he was born; ſecondly, he was made the heir of the promiſes. I need not add any thing of his birth to what we juſt now obſerved of the ſtate of the mother; and as the promiſe was made to Abraham and his ſeed, which was to be reckoned in Iſaac, by the peremptory order of the promiſer, his right to the promiſe, and all the bleſſings it contained, could not be diſputed. The inheritance came by his birth.

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The Heathen nations had no pretenſions to any natural relation to Abraham, and could not boaſt, as the Jews did, that they had him for their father. But as the original promiſe made to him carried in it a bleſſing to all the nations of the earth, every nation, yea, and every particular perſon, had a good title to put in for their ſhare. Nay, when all nations, except the Jews, were left in the caſe of a forſaken deſolate woman, there were great numbers of promiſes made and recorded in ſcripture, that the one ſeed, who is Chriſt, and who had all the promiſed bleſſings in his hand, was deſigned for them: *A light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of his people Iſrael.* In virtue of theſe promiſes, they were begotten and born again; not as Adam's, and even Abraham's common deſcendents were in the courſe of natural generation, but born of the Spirit, and created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works. But nations and kingdoms never were, and there is no reaſon to expect they ever will be thus born. The kingdom and church of Chriſt is made up of particular perſons, immediately and directly united to him their head, and that without any other

other medium but his Spirit conveyed to them, and living in them, by the word of the goſpel, the ſame goſpel that was preached to Abraham, and by which he lived: and as they are thus born by the Spirit and power of God, in the fulfilment of that promiſe and grant of eternal life, *they are all born heirs of the eternal inheritance in Chriſt*; and by virtue of his right conveyed by his teſtament, they have a perfect right to the inheritance, and receive the kingdom which cannot be moved or ſhaken.

There is another reſemblance mentioned by the Apoſtle of a different kind, verſ. 29. *As he who was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him who was born after the Spirit, ſo is it now.* What the Jews, the natural deſcendents of Abraham, did to the Chriſtians in the Apoſtle's time, is well known. *They perſecuted them even unto the death.* But we read nothing of Iſhmael perſecuting Iſaac in any other way, but that Sarah ſaw him mocking at the feaſt of Iſaac's weaning; and we may well enough ſuppoſe, that this was what the Apoſtle calls by that name, when we find him mentioning, Heb. xi. 36. *cruel mockings*, among the

very cruel ſufferings which the children of God endured from the men of the world. The ſevere puniſhment which fell upon the children who mocked Eliſha, ſtands as a caution to all ages, that even bare mocking the children of God is not to be counted a ſlight thing, when it ſtands ſo high in God's reckoning.

The concluſion of that little hiſtory furniſhes out (what it is likely the Apoſtle intended by applying it ſo particularly to the caſe of the followers of Moſes and the diſciples of Chriſt) a ſtriking warning-piece to the Galatians who were ſo ſtrongly tempted to join the former. And thoſe who are acquainted with human nature will readily agree, that it was likely to make a ſtronger impreſſion than all his reaſonings beſides. He does not apply it at all, but lays the event before them juſt as it ſtands, and in the very words it is recorded; but he introduces it in a manner that could hardly miſs to engage their attention. What ſaith the ſcripture? *Caſt out this bond-woman and her ſon; for the ſon of this bond-woman ſhall not be heir with my ſon.* They are the words of Sarah; but they have the ſanction of God himſelf,

himſelf, and carry the higheſt authority. He does not chuſe to ſay how near the deſtruction of Jeruſalem and the temple was; which effectually caſt out that unhappy nation from God's family, and made their worſhip and obſervation of Moſes's law quite impoſſible; but wiſely leaves it to the Galatians themſelves to gather from that event, what a hazard they run who joined themſelves to thoſe who have ſuch a denunciation ſtanding againſt them, and carries the ſame import with that ſolemn warning in another caſe, *Come out of her, my people, leſt you partake in her plagues.*

This conſideration is greatly improved by what the Apoſtle adds as the concluſion of all. The argument is ſtrong for getting out of that dangerous ſociety; but it muſt be ſomething worſe than folly for thoſe who were at liberty to run themſelves into it. The Galatians were abundantly provided in Chriſt. They were children of the free woman, the children of God, and heirs of the inheritance. They could never better their condition by any change they could make; and by what they were tempted to make, they gave up what they had, and had nothing,

or ſomething worſe than nothing, in its room, as we find the Apoſtle ſtrongly proving in the next chapter.

CHAP. V. 1.——6.

1. *Stand faſt therefore in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage.* 2. *Behold, I Paul ſay unto you, that if ye be circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing.* 3. *For I teſtify again to every man that is circumciſed, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.* 4. *Chriſt is become of no effect unto you, whoſoever of you are juſtified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.* 5. *For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith.* 6. *For in Jeſus Chriſt, neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love.*

WHether the words with which this chapter begins ſhould be called an exhortation or a command, is but of little conſequence; as it is evidently an apoſtolical injunction or charge, and that carries all the authority of him who ſent forth the apoſtles, and therefore requires the moſt ſerious attention. And ſeeing, as appears by the connection, it is founded in the accommodation, (whether made by the prophet Iſaiah, or by the Apoſtle himſelf,

ſelf, is really a matter of no moment; for both had equal authority): but ſeeing the accommodation is made by thoſe who had authority to do it; and as we are ſure that the facts did not fall out by chance, but, as is plain from the hiſtory, under the ſpecial divine direction, there is good reaſon to think it was deſigned for this very purpoſe, and that the two mothers and their ſons were an intended repreſentation of the earthly and heavenly Jeruſalem, the law of Moſes, and the goſpel of Chriſt. And therefore the Apoſtle had great reaſon to conclude, as he does, that all who believe in Jeſus Chriſt are free, and ſurely that freedom was well worth preſerving againſt all attacks that might be made upon it, from whatſoever quarter they might come.

It may not be refuſed, that the Apoſtle's immediate intention was to ſecure his converts againſt the ſnare laid for them by the falſe teachers, who wanted to bring them under the law of Moſes. But as the liberty they were called into muſt have been the ſame which our Lord gives to his true diſciples, John viii. 31. 32. the Apoſtle calls it *the liberty wherewith Chriſt had ſet them free*; and they muſt be free indeed whom the Son makes free; it muſt therefore extend very

ry wide, even as far as the whole immunities, rights, and privileges of the children of God do. Very different this from what goes under this name among the men of the world, and which they are ſo madly fond on, but when well looked into, is found little better than what the ſacred hiſtorian mentions as the unhappineſs of old Iſrael when there was no king, viz. liberty to do what was right in their own eyes, while, at the ſame time, they continue in the very worſt kind of bondage without regret, and even with pleaſure; bound under ſin and death, ſlaves to the baſeſt luſts and vileſt pleaſures, and ſhamefully captivated and carried along by the courſe of the world, and the ſpirit that works in the children of diſobedience. It is not for nothing that the Apoſtle ſtates the Chriſtian's freedom and liberty in deliverance from the law and its curſing power; for there is the root of all our bondage. *The ſting of death is ſin*; by that it kills; *but the ſtrength of ſin*, or what gives *ſin* its dominion and killing power, *is the law*. Whenever therefore one is delivered from the power of the law, and brought under the meaſures of grace, the ſtrength of ſin is gone,

gone, and it can no longer maintain its dominion, Rom. vi. 14.

The horrible nature of this bondage, and the horror it creates where-ever it is perceived and felt, the excellency of that liberty which Chriſt the Son of God gives, with that joy unſpeakable and full of glory which attends it, and eſpecially the prodigious price the purchaſe coſt him, muſt be allowed motives ſtrong enough to engage every man who has ſenſe enough to know what he is about, to exert his utmoſt activity for obtaining it, and to ſtand firm in the poſſeſſion of it, that he do not on any temptation, or for any price, let it ſlip: and that cannot be done without having done all to ſtand, Eph. vi. 13.; nor that without putting on the whole armour of God, as we are directed, verſ. 14. *et ſeqq.* God himſelf has graciouſly provided complete armour: he has done more; he has made a full proviſion of grace in his bleſſed Son: he has not only permitted us to come, but has invited, nay, and commanded us, to come boldly, and aſſured us of finding what is abundantly ſufficient for the weakeſt and moſt worthleſs of Adam's ſinful race; enough

nough to make the very weakeſt able to do all things, Phil. iv. 13. And can any thing be more abſurd than to look for more, unleſs it be to look for it any where elſe?

But there is ſomething greatly worſe than abſurdity and folly in thoſe who are thus abundantly provided, when they turn aſide to the law. There is ſomething very ſolemn and peremptory in the certification the Apoſtle gives the Galatians, ℣ 2. *et ſeqq. Behold, I Paul ſay unto you;* I Paul, Chriſt's apoſtle and ambaſſador to you, (and what I ſay is the ſame as if Chriſt himſelf ſaid ſo in his own proper perſon), *That if you are circumciſed, Chriſt ſhall profit you nothing:* The moſt dreadful denunciation that can poſſibly be made to creatures in our circumſtances, creatures dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. Had we never had any further intimation of the mind of God, we muſt have concluded, that there was no way of being delivered but by the almighty power of God; nor any hope of that, but by abſolutely free and unmerited mercy. But when he has opened ſuch a door of hope as he has done, in ſending his own beloved Son, with all the fullneſs of eternal life

life in his hand, to be the Saviour of the world, and to give this life to all that will come to him for it, with this expreſs declaration, that there is no ſalvation in any other, and that it is only through him that we have any the leaſt mercy to expect. If we are found in ſuch circumſtances as that Chriſt ſhall profit us nothing, we are, we muſt be, conſigned to eternal perdition, without any poſſibility of relief.

But ſome may poſſibly think this a hard ſaying, Have none who are circumciſed any benefit by Chriſt? What then ſhould become of the Jews who believed in him? nay, and what ſhould have become of Paul himſelf and his fellow-apoſtles, who no doubt were all circumciſed? We need only obſerve, what every body who reads the epiſtle cannot miſs to obſerve, that he is not here addreſſing the Jews who were circumciſed before they believed in Chriſt, but the Gentiles who never were, and yet were admitted to all the privileges of believers, or the children of God by faith, without circumciſion, or any other works of the law, or obſervances injoined by it. To them he ſays, *If they are circumciſed*

now, Chriſt ſhould profit them nothing; and they would be in the ſame caſe as if he had not come at all, or done any thing to redeem them from the curſe, not of the law of Moſes, which they were never under, but of that original law which brought Adam and all his poſterity under ſin and death.

But ſtill it may be ſaid, Tho' it muſt be allowed that circumciſion, and all other legal obſervances, were ſuperfluous, and therefore uſeleſs to them; yet how comes circumciſion particularly to have ſuch a dreadful tendency? To this it might be anſwered, That circumciſion, and the other ritual obſervances of the Jewiſh law, were figures for the time then preſent, and were never deſigned to continue longer than the promiſed ſeed ſhould come; then they expired of courſe, and were no longer the ordinances of God. The outward circumciſion became the conciſion, a mere mangling of the fleſh; and the true circumciſion was that of the heart, of the Spirit, and not of the letter. If thoſe then who were not bound by the law of Moſes, ſhould ſubmit to the external circumciſion, it muſt have been at leaſt a conſtructive de-

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nying that Chriſt was come; and the more ſo, that it was the bondage of thoſe who openly denied him.

But the Apoſtle gives another and a ſtronger reaſon, verſ. 3. 4. *They who are circumciſed*, whoever they are, *become debtors*, that is, *bound to fulfil the whole law*. This he ſays he *teſtifies to them again*; by which it appears, this was not the firſt time he had teſtified this: and though we could neither ſee how, nor why; yet the teſtimony of the Apoſtle muſt have been a ſufficient evidence; for it was the teſtimony of him that ſent him, the God of truth, and his bleſſed Son, the Amen, the faithful, and true witneſs; he could ſay with great truth what his maſter ſaid before him, that the teſtimony he gave, and the words which he ſpake, were not his own, but his who ſent him. But we are not left even with this great aſſurance; the very matter of the teſtimony proves the truth of it: for by the ſame authority which bound them to be circumciſed, they were bound to every thing injoined by it: it is the Apoſtle James's very plain reaſoning in another caſe, James ii. 10. 11. It was accordingly the initiating ordinance by which

ſtrangers were proſelyted, or entered into the Jewiſh church, by which they were put in all reſpects in the very ſame condition as if they had been born Jews, and were as ſtrictly bound to all the obſervances injoined by the law.

By this ſtate of the caſe we may eaſily perceive, that though the Apoſtle changes the expreſſion in the next verſe, he does not at all change the ſentiment conveyed by both, which is preciſely the ſame. He had ſaid, *that if they were circumciſed, Chriſt would profit them nothing*; and here *Chriſt is become of no effect to you, whoſoever are juſtified by the law*: For when they had brought themſelves under the law, and bound themſelves to do what was injoined there, by that law they muſt be judged, and by it they muſt be juſtified, if ever they are ſo. But as no man liveth and ſinneth not, he had told them before, that it was the ſame thing to be under the law, and under the curſe: for where-ever the law finds a ſinner, it as certainly binds him under death, as the lawgiver is unchangeably true.

But it may be, and has been ſaid, over and over, How can this be, when the Apoſtle

Apoſtle has told us in expreſs terms, that Chriſt has redeemed at leaſt all right believers from the curſe of the law, being himſelf made a curſe for them? And this ſome have carried ſo far as to ſay, that the law being fulfilled by the Redeemer in their room and ſtead, the law to them is diveſted of its penal ſanction, and has loſt its curſing power. There muſt certainly be ſome miſtake in this matter on one ſide or other. That Chriſt has redeemed his people from the curſe of the law, is beyond all doubt; that he fulfilled all righteouſneſs, which could not be done but by fulfilling the whole law, is as certain: and I believe it will readily be allowed, that he did act in the characters of head over all things to his church; for that is inſeparable from the character of a redeemer and ſaviour; and, upon the whole, that whatever he did and ſuffered was not for himſelf, but for the benefit of thoſe whom he repreſented; and that he put himſelf in their room, and took upon himſelf the burden of the curſe which they were brought under by the law. Could it then be clearly perceived what that law was, the curſe of which he took upon himſelf, and which he fulfilled, I

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more than ſuſpect our diſputes would be at an end. Nor would that be a matter of great difficulty, if men who believe, or profeſs to believe, that the writings we have in our hands are the word of God, could have contented themſelves with what he has there ſeen fit to lay to our hands, without ſupplementing, out of their own heads, what they imagined was wanting there.

When man was firſt created out of the duſt of the earth, he needed not have been told, that this fixed a relation between him and his creator, which inferred all the duties of gratitude and love, in their utmoſt extent and higheſt degree: and being created after the image of his creator, he did not need to have theſe ſpecified particularly to him; they were written in his heart, inlaid in his very frame and conſtitution, and this is the only true and original law of nature. But it was not on theſe, or the obſervance of them, that the life and death of man was put, but on a poſitive precept, the breach of which brought all mankind under the curſe, or, which is the ſame thing, bound them under death by the judgement given

ven on that firſt tranſgreſſion. This particular law Chriſt neither did nor could fulfil: nor was it neceſſary; becauſe man was never deſigned to be reſtored to that life which was forfeited by the tranſgreſſion: but he ſubmitted to the curſe, and redeemed men from it, that they might be free to enter on that life which he was ſent to give.

On this gift which God made to mankind of a redeemer and ſaviour, and eternal life in him, there ariſes a new relation. The original ones are greatly ſtrengthened by new benefits, greatly beyond what aroſe from their firſt creation, and conſequential duties founded in this frame and conſtitution of grace; and where the gift is received, they ariſe as naturally as the other did, and in the ſame manner. The law of love is written in the heart of every true believer in Chriſt, which might very properly be called *the law of grace*, as the other is *the law of creation*. And this is the law, the only law given by God for mankind; which has the promiſe of eternal life. The law of Moſes, founded in the deliverance of that people from their bondage in Egypt, and the grant of the earthly

earthly Canaan, was a ſenſible figure or image of it: it curſed the tranſgreſſors, and at the ſame time led them to the relief, in the promiſe of pardon, through the ſacrifices which he had appointed. But that the uſe of theſe ſacrifices and waſhings, and purifications joined with them, might not be miſtaken, as it was by the later Jews, the pardon had no other effect, (and a bare pardon can have no other), but merely reſtoring them the life they had forfeited. They were ſtill left under the original curſe, until they were redeemed from it by a better ſacrifice than theſe; which had not only the promiſe of pardon, but of eternal life annexed to it. This was conveyed down through all the periods of that law, in the promiſe made to Abraham, and the goſpel preached to him, as the Apoſtle had told the Galatians, the ſame law of grace promulged in paradiſe upon the entrance of ſin, which has been in force ever ſince, and will be, without variation, to the end of the world; framed not to curſe, but to relieve from the curſe; but which it is eaſy to ſee muſt greatly enhance the curſe on the deſpiſers of it, Heb. ii. 2. 3. Surely thoſe who ſet up any other

other law, (and many have been ſet up), with the uſual ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments, ſet up a kingdom and moral government of their own, in a direct oppoſition to the kingdom of grace; and it muſt be a ſtrange ſort of blindneſs or infatuation that can keep men from perceiving the conſequences.

The Apoſtle has ſet this matter before us in ſuch a ſtriking light, that none can pretend ignorance. He has not ſo much as left a colour for the common expedient too often practiſed, making one text or portion of ſcripture deſtroy another. His words are plain and poſitive, *That whoſoever ſeeks to be juſtified by the law, Chriſt is become of none effect to them; they are fallen from grace.* The firſt part of this doom, as we have it rendered, is preciſely the ſame with what he had ſaid, ℣ 2. of thoſe who were circumciſed, *that Chriſt ſhould profit them nothing.* The word he there uſes expreſſes only the event; but that which he uſes here charges it upon thoſe who take this courſe; they by their own fact and deed have given up with Chriſt, and have no more to do with him than if they were dead to him, even as the

right Chriſtian has given up with the law to have no more to do with it: for it is the ſame word; and in the nature of the thing it muſt be ſo. Law is the inſtrument and meaſure of moral government; in which there is not, nor indeed can be, any room for Chriſt: and for the ſame reaſon they who ſeek to be purified by the law, *are fallen from grace*; becauſe Chriſt and grace go hand in hand; for in him alone it is that any ſinner can be accepted of God, or ſhare in any effects of his grace. The Apoſtle puts the caſe in a very clear and ſtrong light, Rom. xi. 6. "If it is by grace, "then it is no more of works: otherwiſe "grace is no more grace. But if it be of "works, it is no more of grace: otherwiſe "works are no more works." Much learned pains has been taken by the patrons of moral government, and many expedients have been tried to bring them both into one conſiſtent ſyſtem. But after all their labour, it is no better than the iron and clay in Nebuchadnezzar's image: they may be laid together, but can never incorporate; for whatever room one takes up, the other muſt be ſo far ſhut out. It was this very thing that ruined the Jewiſh nation: they had a zeal for God, and

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ſought after righteouſneſs; but they ſought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. And thus "being "ignorant of the righteouſneſs of God, and "going about to eſtabliſh their own righ- "teouſneſs, they did not ſubmit themſelves "to the righteouſneſs of God;" and thus rejected Chriſt, who is the end of the law, for righteouſneſs to all that believe, Rom. ix. 31. 32. and x. 2. 3. 4.; and ſtrange, very ſtrange it is, that men of ſenſe and learning, who have this fatal example before them, ſhould yet ſtumble at the ſame ſtumbling-ſtone, after all the pains our gracious God has taken to caution againſt it.

And that none might flatter themſelves with ſuch deluſive hopes, the Apoſtle, verſ. 5. & 6. makes ſuch an account of the Chriſtian hope, and the Chriſtian life, as ſhows the abſolute neceſſity of either renouncing our own righteouſneſs, or giving up with Chriſt, as God has ſet him forth in his teſtimony, a propitiatory through faith in his blood, and conſequently the end of the law for righteouſneſs. Whoſoever ſets about making out a righteouſneſs for themſelves by the terms

of law, if they mind what they are about, will very ſoon find themſelves condemned by it, I may ſafely ſay, on every turn. Imperfection of one kind or other cleaves ſo cloſely to their beſt performances, that they find themſelves forced into one of two very ſilly ſhifts, and both of them, I am afraid, very common; either to bring down the law to the meaſure of their attainments, or to have recourſe to Chriſt and his grace to patch up what they find wanting in their own obedience. The laſt is, I believe, very common among the profeſſors of Chriſtianity, who are ſtrangers to its ſpirit. And for the other, we find what they call *ſincerity* put in the place of that perfection the divine law requires; for this reaſon, which they perſuade themſelves is a good one, that God, as he is a righteous moral governor, can require no more than the ſubject can perform: for juſt ſo much as there is of grace or ſupernatural divine aſſiſtance, ſo much is taken off from the dignity and rewardableneſs of virtue and obedience.

Nothing can be imagined more directly oppoſite to the account the Apoſtle gives of Chriſtianity, or the ſtate of a believer

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in Chriſt, and a converſation ſuch as becomes or anſwers his goſpel. For, in the firſt place, he ſays, inſtead of attempting to make out a righteouſneſs for themſelves, *they wait for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith*, or believing. He ſays further, that even this, which is the eaſieſt-like thing that can well be conceived; yet even this, they do not propoſe to make good by any powers of their own. And he adds, that it is in the ſtrength of this faith only that their obedience is carried on from the beginning to the end of it.

As to the firſt of theſe, their *waiting for the hope of righteouſneſs by faith*. The words, as they ſtand in the original, may admit of different conſtructions, and have accordingly been differently conſtructed by interpreters who had different purpoſes to anſwer by them. It has accordingly been warmly diſputed, whether the words, *by faith*, ſhould be joined with *waiting* or *righteouſneſs*; that is, whether the Apoſtle means to ſay, *that they waited by faith for the hope of righteouſneſs*, or, *that they waited for the hope of that righteouſneſs which is by faith*. It will not be diſputed, that the Chriſtian who lives by faith, and walks by

by faith, whatever promiſed bleſſings he has in view, he in like manner waits by faith. But one who conſiders the context and the Apoſtle's views with any attention, will eaſily perceive it is the righteouſneſs which is by faith, in oppoſition to that which is by works of law, which he here intends. For, beſides that he ſays, *they wait through the Spirit*, which certainly takes in faith, and therefore the latter needed not to have been mentioned at all, he had immediately before been ſetting forth every attempt to make out a righteouſneſs by the law, as giving up Chriſt; really renouncing him as one they had nothing to do with, and of courſe were fallen from grace, and had nothing to expect by it; for this plain reaſon, that thoſe who were in Chriſt renounced and gave up all pretenſions to any right they either had, or ever could make out for themſelves, and reſted all their hopes in the gift of righteouſneſs conveyed in the promiſe, where nothing could be of any uſe but believing.

The hope of this righteouſneſs may likewiſe admit of different meanings; as it may either denote that hope which has this righteouſneſs for its object, or the hope which the

the righteouſneſs by faith gives; that is, the hope of obtaining the promiſed bleſſing. But in either of theſe views it would ſeem not very proper to ſay they *waited* for hope. The moſt natural conſtruction will be to take hope here, as it is very frequently and very naturally put for the thing hoped for, the bleſſing conveyed by the promiſe, the hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, has promiſed before the world began, and when there was none to receive it but his own eternal Son.

But however eaſy it may ſeem to thoſe who are ſtrangers to the difficulties which very naturally occur in the way of believing, to wait for the fulfilment of a promiſe made by a faithful God; yet the Apoſtle ſays, the right Chriſtian does not attempt even that, but *through the Spirit.* The word *Spirit* is applied ſo differently in the apoſtolical writings, that there is hardly a text where it occurs, which has not occaſioned a good deal of wrangling. It is very often, and perhaps moſt frequently, uſed in a perſonal ſenſe, as we may call it, either for the Holy Spirit, or as a divine epithet, God is a Spirit; or for the ſpirit of a man, or theſe kind of beings we call *angels,*

angels, which are not immured in ſuch groſs bodies as ours: and ſometimes, for what our Lord ſays is *born* of the ſpirit, as the Apoſtle calls *the new creature*, or *new man*; though ſeldom in this ſenſe, except where it is oppoſed to *fleſh*, or ſome equivalent term. The *goſpel* of Chriſt likewiſe bears this title, or perhaps, more properly, the ſtate of Chriſtians under the goſpel is called often *ſpirit* for ſpecial reaſons; but rarely, if ever, is the goſpel called *ſpirit*, but in oppoſition to the *law*, as a dead and killing letter. Our Lord likewiſe uſes it, and his apoſtles after him, to denote what we call the temper and diſpoſition of one's mind, good or bad.

It is hardly credible what uſe has been made, eſpecially of the two laſt ſenſes of the word, to explain away not only the operations and actings, but even the very being of the Holy Spirit. To enumerate the various attempts of this kind would require too much time; nor indeed could it be done to any purpoſe, without running over all the particular texts where he is mentioned. Our only concern is with that ſenſe in which the Apoſtle uſes the word *ſpirit* here and downward in this epiſtle; and that will not be hard to find, if we will be at

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pains to carry along with us, what our Lord ſaid of the Holy Spirit in his diſcourſe to his diſciples immediately before his death, which he promiſed to ſend as another comforter to them, when he ſhould leave them to return to his Father. This will give us this infallible rule, that where-ever we find any of theſe things which that Spirit was ſent to effect, attributed to the Spirit indefinitely, we may certainly conclude, that it is the ſame promiſed Spirit which is meant. In conſequence of this, we find the Apoſtle, 1 Cor. xii. deſcribing the different gifts of the Spirit, which he ſays *he diſtributes to every one as he will.* So far then as theſe gifts, or any of them, are found in any perſon, ſo far we muſt conclude, that ſuch perſon hath received the Spirit. When therefore the Apoſtle ſays, that he and his fellow-believers in Chriſt *waited for the hope of righteouſneſs*, that is, *eternal life, through the Spirit*, we are not at liberty to take up with any lower ſenſe of that word.

Nor indeed will any lower ſenſe anſwer the purpoſe which the Apoſtle ſays the Spirit he ſpeaks of does. It cannot be our own ſpirits, in whatſoever light we

conſider them, whether renewed or otherwiſe; for that is the man himſelf who waits. If it be ſaid, that it is the goſpel of Chriſt, and the light which that brings into the mind; the goſpel is indeed the miniſtration and the miniſter of the Spirit; it is by it that the gift of the Spirit is made, notified, and conveyed; and by it, as the powerful creating word of God, the Spirit conveys life, and all the powers of life, to the dead ſinner; ſupports, maintains, and carries it on to perfection; being indeed the principle and ſpring of all vital actings, that is, of all that are really and ſpiritually good: and when this Spirit is either with-held or withdrawn from the word of the goſpel, it is really as dead a letter, and as weak and ineffectual, as the law itſelf; but the Chriſtian, through the influence of this Spirit, is kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

On this plan the Apoſtle gives us a complete ſyſtem of the Chriſtian religion in one ſentence, conſiſting only of two articles, and which he gives in two words, viz. *faith* and *love:* for thus, he ſays, that as things ſtand in Chriſt Jeſus, theſe are all;

all; and nothing elſe can anſwer any purpoſe. He mentions indeed only *circumciſion* and *uncircumciſion*: but as he had ſaid, that thoſe who were circumciſed ſtood bound to all the duties and obſervations injoined by the law; all that man can do in obedience to any or all the commands of God are taken in under it. The exception the Apoſtle makes of *faith working by love*, as the only thing that can be of any uſe, confirms this conſtruction as ſtrongly as if he had ſaid in expreſs terms, that in Chriſt Jeſus *nothing* can avail any man but that *faith which worketh by love*.

Here again we are led away by a ſet of teachers very near of kin to thoſe the Apoſtle and his Galatians had to do with, from the *perſon of Chriſt*, and union with him in one Spirit, to the *word of the goſpel*, and the ſtate of thoſe who live under it. Be it ſo: What will be the conſequence? The goſpel is the teſtimony which God hath given concerning his Son Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore Chriſt in the goſpel muſt be the ſame Chriſt who ſuffered at Jeruſalem, and now ſits on the right hand of the majeſty on high, with all power and authority in heaven and earth. The goſpel-

ſtate, then, where-ever it is believed and acquieſced in, muſt be the ſame with what our Lord calls *being in*, and *abiding in himſelf*; and which he aſſures us is abſolutely neceſſary; becauſe without him, or ſeparated and apart from him, we can (even the apoſtles themſelves could) no more do any thing, than the branches can bring forth fruit, unleſs they abide in the vine.

Hence then ariſes the abſolute neceſſity and uſe of *faith* in the Chriſtian life; which, if it was but tolerably underſtood, the world would ceaſe wondering why the miniſters of Chriſt, inſtead of giving lectures of morality, and inculcating ſocial duties, inſiſt ſo much on faith or believing the teſtimony of God about his Son. It might be a ſufficient apology for them, that the Apoſtle Paul ſet the example; for he determined to know nothing among the Corinthians but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified: and he had great good reaſon; for *he is the way, the truth, and the life. So that no man can come unto the Father but by him.* And if there is any truth in him that can be depended on, no man can ſo much as know the Father, but ſuch as he manifeſts him to. But he who hath ſeen him

him hath ſeen the Father; for he is the perfect image of the inviſible God: and, which is more, the Father is in him, and he in the Father, in ſuch a manner, that one cannot be ſeen without the other: and, which is yet more to us, by ſending him to be the Saviour of the world, God has diſplayed his true character, and what we have either to hope or fear from the great creator and proprietor of the univerſe. As therefore it is only by the teſtimony and record which he has made concerning his Son that we can know any thing of him, the neceſſity of faith can never be too ſtrongly inculcated: for if the teſtimony is not believed and acquieſced in, it can be of no more uſe to us than if it had never been given, unleſs it is to increaſe our condemnation: For thus we find it ſtated by the very truth itſelf: *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light.*

But the neceſſity, and what is more, the incomparable worth and excellency of faith will further appear from its uſe, and the great purpoſes which it is deſigned to anſwer, and moſt certainly does anſwer, where-ever it is real and unfeigned; which,

which, in one word, is to produce univerſal holineſs in heart and life: For the Apoſtle ſays, *it works*, and works *by love*; and love, we are well aſſured, is the fulfilling of the whole law. So much as there is love, ſo much holineſs, and no more: and perfect love is perfect holineſs; for he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. And if we can perceive how faith works love, and works by it, we will perceive the whole myſtery of Chriſtianity, that hidden wiſdom, which God hath ordained before the world for our glory.

When the Apoſtle ſays *faith works*, his intention, in this place, is not ſo much to diſtinguiſh it from what James calls a *dead faith*, which indeed is no faith at all, as to deſcribe the true nature, and what may very properly be called the very eſſence of it; that it is an active principle, which cannot be idle ſo much as a moment, unleſs it is marred and hindered by ſome counterbalance, as he tells us downward, that *the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh.*

No body needs be told what believing is: but it will be very neceſſary to be told what it is we are to believe; and it will readily

readily appear, that it is the teſtimony of God concerning his Son, and that reaches very wide. The capital fact atteſted is, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God. But there are a multitude of facts connected with it, and which will be found to take in the whole ſacred record from the beginning to the end of it; which all contribute to illuſtrate and eſtabliſh the certainty of it, the place and ſtation he holds, and the end and deſign of his coming into the world to ſave ſinners of mankind; that he has put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf, and has all the fullneſs of life lodged in his hand; that whoſoever has the Son hath life; and makes it as certain, on the other hand, that he who hath not the Son hath not life. From this neceſſary and inſeparable connection between Jeſus Chriſt and eternal life, ariſes an axiom of very great moment in the practice of Chriſtianity, viz. that eternal life is as certainly given, and preciſely in the ſame manner, as Jeſus Chriſt is. And hence it neceſſarily follows, that as all who hear the goſpel without any diſtinction whatever, are not only allowed and warranted, but called and commanded in the moſt peremptory

peremptory manner, to believe in him with the ſtrongeſt aſſurances, that they ſhall not periſh, but have everlaſting life; what ſhall we ſay? what ground of doubting have we left, whether the gift of pardon and life in him is to be believed with the ſame aſſurance, and particular application to ourſelves, while yet we neither have, nor can have, any of theſe qualifications which ſome people call *the conditions* or *terms of the promiſe*, or *the terms of grace*, which, by the way, is a direct contradiction in terms; for *if it is of works*, eaſy or difficult alters not the nature of the thing; if it be of works of any kind, it is no more of grace.

I ſhould not have mentioned theſe things here, as they lie ſo fair in the teſtimony of God that no unprejudiced reader can poſſibly miſs of them; but that it is in this view, and in this view only, that faith either works love, or works by it. No truth is more frequently inculcated in the divine record, than that as men, all mankind are naturally alienated from God, through the ignorance that is in them: ſo that they are enemies in their very minds, through wicked works; nay, as

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if *enemies* was too ſoft a word, the Apoſtle ſays, the carnal mind is *enmity* itſelf; and it is foſtered and maintained by an evil conſcience, the native effect of ſin. This paints the God, who really is love, in the dreadful light of an avenging enemy, from whom the ſinner has nothing to expect but everlaſting deſtruction. One may be prevailed on to forgive an enemy, and even to love him for God's ſake; but when God himſelf appears an enemy, what motive or ground can be found for engaging the love of a creature, who cannot love any thing but what he is quite pleaſed with? It is true, as God is perfectly good, he ought to be loved for himſelf, abſtracting from every other conſideration; but then he muſt be ſeen as he is in himſelf, and in his true character; and which cannot be ſeen any how, but where his true character is to be ſeen, and that is in theſe manifeſtations only which he has made of himſelf in Jeſus Chriſt.

It would, I dare ſay, be ſuperfluous labour to ſhow how it is the peculiar province of faith, to perceive the glory of

God as he has made it ſhine forth in the face of Jeſus Chriſt. The man that believes the teſtimony of God, that he has ſent his own beloved Son to be the Saviour of the world, will certainly find it very hard to believe, at the ſame time, that he is the world's enemy. He that believes that he has given up this his beloved Son a ſacrifice for putting away ſin, and a ranſom for the lives and ſouls of ſinners, muſt find his conſcience purged from dead works; ſo that inſtead of filling his ſoul with the terrors of the Almighty, it ſpeaks the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding. But when faith perceives the grant of eternal life made to this ſame beloved Son of God, in behalf of periſhing ſinners, the terms of the grant fully performed by him, and all the fullneſs of life lodged in his hand, with the expreſs order to give it to all without exception who will come and receive it at his hand, be they who they will, or what they will, how can ſuch a believer miſs knowing and believing the love of God to him, and reſenting it with the warmeſt acknowledgements of gratitude

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and love? Thus the law of love is planted in the believer's heart; and as love is the fulfilling of the whole law, and all the commandments of God injoin no more than the native and genuine actings of love, there is no more commanded than what true genuine love would have done, whether it had been commanded or not. Thus the great promiſe of that new teſtament, of which Chriſt is the mediator, is fulfilled in the believer; the law of God is written in his heart, and as the Apoſtle John ſays of every one that believes, he hath truly and properly the witneſs or teſtimony in himſelf.

CHAP. v. 7. —— 26.

7. *Ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the truth?* 8. *This perſuaſion cometh not of him that calleth you.* 9. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* 10. *I have confidence in you through the Lord, that you will be none otherwiſe minded: but he that troubleth you ſhall bear his judgement, whoſoever he be.* 11. *And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumciſion, why do I yet ſuffer perſecution? then is the offence of the croſs ceaſed.* 12. *I would they were even cut off which trouble you.* 13. *For, brethren, ye have been called into liberty; only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh, but by love*

ſerve one another. 14. *For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf.* 15. *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.* 16. *This I ſay then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye ſhall not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh.* 17. *For the fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit, and the Spirit againſt the fleſh: and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* 18. *But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.* 19. *Now the works of the fleſh are manifeſt, which are theſe, Adultery, fornication, uncleanneſs laſciviouſneſs,* 20. *Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, ſtrife, ſeditions, hereſies,* 21. *Envyings, murders, drunkenneſs, revellings, and ſuch like: of the which I tell you before, as I alſo have told you in time paſt, that they which do ſuch things, ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* 22. *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs, faith,* 23. *Meekneſs, temperance: againſt ſuch there is no law.* 24. *And they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the affections, and luſts.* 25. *If we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit.* 26. *Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.*

THE Apoſtle having, in the foregoing part of this epiſtle, ſet the caſe he was warning theſe Galatians againſt in every light in which it could be viewed, and ſhowed them how the change they were tempted to make was not

not only unprofitable and uſeleſs, but dangerous in the higheſt degre, nay, and abſolutely deſtructive, not only of their peace and ſafety, but their very ſouls; he comes now to conclude with a conſideration, which, it were much to be wiſhed, every one would ſeriouſly weigh, when they find themſelves in ſimilar circumſtances, that they may not be raſhly drawn off from their obedience to the truth in any inſtance, as there never will be temptations wanting, ſo long as there are ſo many who lie in wait to deceive, and pervert the right way of the Lord.

He had reminded them of that chearful readineſs with which they received the knowledge of Chriſt from him, what bleſſings they then heaped upon him, and what warmth of love they ſhowed in the whole of their behaviour toward him. He now puts them in mind of the effect his preaching, and their knowledge of the truth, had on them; and does it in a way which could hardly fail to engage them to compare the evidence they had of the truth, with what their new teachers had to advance for drawing them off from it; *You did run well; who hindered you, that*

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you ſhould not obey the truth? I only obſerve on the tranſlation, that the word the Apoſtle uſes ſignifies only *the obedience of faith*; the heart's acquieſcing and reſting in the truth as it comes inforced by the teſtimony of God, and giving it that weight and influence on the believer's conduct, which ſuch authority deſerves.

In this courſe they ſet out fairly. The Apoſtle expreſſes it in the alluſion we very frequently meet with in the New-Teſtament writings, this Apoſtle's eſpecially: and the alluſion is well choſen to repreſent the neceſſity of the utmoſt exertion of activity and diligence. The Apoſtle gives us a pattern of it in his own conduct, Phil. iii. 13. 14. "this one thing I do, for-"getting thoſe things which are behind, and "reaching forth to theſe which are be-"fore, I preſs toward the mark, for the "prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt "Jeſus;" in the ſame terms he exhorts the Hebrews, xii. 1. 2. And on account of the many difficulties and ſtrong oppoſition Chriſtians have to lay their account with, from the rulers of the darkneſs of this world without, and from the fleſh with its affections and luſts within, it is likewiſe called

called *labouring*, *wreſtling*, *fighting*. The Galatians had ſet out in this courſe; and the Apoſtle teſtifies they had *run well*; and that they could not do without keeping the prize and goal conſtantly in their eye, and keeping the ſtraight courſe, without loſing time by turning out of the way on any account. They had the truth of God for their guide; and ſo long as they kept by that, it was impoſſible they could miſcarry: for there they had at once perfect light to ſee their way, and perfect power to ſtand againſt, and to overcome all difficulty and oppoſition; being there provided with the whole armour of God, and the ſame mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus, the author and finiſher of their faith.

Well then might the Apoſtle aſk, *who hindered them* to perſevere and go forward? The ſhield of faith, had it been uſed as it ought, would have quenched all the fiery darts of the devil; but when any one point of truth is ſuffered to ſlip, ſo much faith muſt loſe of its ſtrength; and ſo much clear advantage will the enemy gain. His agents had brought the ſufficiency of the grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus into doubt with them, and were about

bout perſuading them to patch it up with their own works, circumciſion and obſervance of the law of Moſes, and to reſt their hope of ſalvation on that; by which they ſhould have been inſenſibly ſtolen off from the only foundation which God had laid, Chriſt and his grace, and thereby left to the will of their enemies. It was this unhappy ſuggeſtion that ſtopped and hindered them from purſuing the courſe they had ſo happily begun. But from whatſoever quarter it came, he aſſures them, verſ. 8. *it came not from him who called them.*

By what he ſays, verſ. 11. to vindicate himſelf from the groſs imputation the ſeducers had loaded him with, viz. that he was himſelf as much for circumciſion as they, which probably they ſupported by his circumciſing Timothy, ſome have thought that *by him that called them*, he meant himſelf; and wanted to clear himſelf from having any hand in bringing them into the ſnare which they were unhappily intangled in: and it might have paſſed, were it not, that the *calling* he here ſpeaks of is of ſuch a nature, as nothing but the Spirit and power of God could make effectual; and

that

that accordingly we find it conſtantly attributed to him as his peculiar work. This gives his words another ſort of authority than any thing coming from himſelf: for if it come not from God, at beſt it muſt be uſeleſs, and could anſwer no good purpoſe; ſo far from it, that it had, and all attempts of this kind muſt have, a very dangerous tendency. It lodges a very injurious imputation on his conſummate wiſdom, as if he had not provided his people in all the neceſſary means of ſalvation. It is worſe, if any thing can be ſo; it is a ſacrilegious uſurpation of the incommunicable authority of the only lawgiver and king, and making void the goſpel of Chriſt with their patch-work inſtitutions, as the Jewiſh doctors did the law of Moſes by their traditions.

In this view, the Apoſtle very pertinently applies the well-known proverb, verſ. 9. *A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.* It may be applied either to particular perſons or ſocieties. A ſmall error inſenſibly admitted into one's ſyſtem of faith, often proves like a dead fly in the moſt precious ointment of the apothecary. Error, though ſeemingly ſmall, either in doctrine or

practice, getting admittance into a church, is yet more dangerous, becauſe its influence is like to be more extenſive. In both theſe reſpects, it was a very ſeaſonable caution to the Galatians, and will be ſo to all Chriſtians, ſo long as the world ſtands. Thoſe eſpecially who aſſume to themſelves a power of impoſing in ſmall matters, may very eaſily be drawn on to carry it further than even themſelves firſt intended. It is not improbable, that theſe ſame ſeducers the Apoſtle treats with ſuch ſeverity, really thought there was no harm for Gentile Chriſtians to admit circumciſion, any more than the natural Jews; who, though they believed in Chriſt, yet continued very zealous for the legal obſervances, until the deſtruction of the temple made them impracticable.

What the Apoſtle adds, verſ. 10. of his being well perſuaded that the Galatians, on cool conſideration, *would be of the ſame mind with him*, might paſs for a maſterpiece of that kind of addreſs, which thoſe who have the beſt knowledge of mankind juſtly reckon moſt effectual for ſoothing thoſe they deal with into a compliance with their intentions; eſpecially when

when he lays the whole blame of their unſettled ſtate on thoſe *who troubled them*, and very expreſsly conſigns them to the divine vengeance; which thoſe he writes to had no other way of avoiding being partners in, but by a ſteady and reſolute adherence to the truth as they had received it. But beſides that he, on all occaſions, very peremptorily diſclaimed the perſuaſive words of man's wiſdom, and what the wiſdom of the world ſuggeſted, he appears to have built his perſuaſion on a very different bottom; he *was perſuaded in the Lord*. This might ſeem, in ſuch a man as Paul, to indicate ſome particular revelation made to him concerning them. But there was no need of it in the preſent caſe. They had received the Lord Jeſus, and his Spirit, and of courſe were taken under his direction and ſpecial care. However, therefore, the adverſary might be permitted to trouble, and even to ſhake them, not ſo properly for their trial, as to make them feel that their ſtrength did not lie in themſelves, but in the grace which was in Chriſt Jeſus; yet he was ſure none ſhould be able to pluck them out of his hand; for

they were kept by the mighty power of God through faith unto ſalvation.

There is ſomething in the Apoſtle's denunciation of judgement on thoſe who troubled and endeavoured to unſettle them, *whoſoever they be*, which plainly enough refers to what he had ſaid before: *Though we, or an angel from heaven, ſhould preach any other goſpel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accurſed.* And this explains both the judgement he here ſpeaks of, and the *cutting off*, verſ. 12. which ſome interpreters refer to the ſentence of excommunication, and being cut off from communion with the faithful in church-privileges. There is indeed ſomething very awful in that ſentence, as it carries in it a ſort of temporary curſe; but which is only conditional, and is taken off by ſincere repentance. But the curſe the Apoſtle ſpeaks of, infers ſuch a cutting off as ſhould put it out of the power of theſe ſeducers to give them any further trouble, which excommunication could not do. And when it is further conſidered, what we may be pretty ſure of, that theſe bigotted Jews would never join in communion with the uncircumciſed, when they would

would not ſo much as eat with them, ſuch a ſentence would have been of no uſe at all; beſides the abſurdity of caſting out of their communion thoſe who were never in it.

We need not ſtand on the Apoſtle's vindication of himſelf, verſ. 11. It was very proper that he ſhould aſſure them, that he had never given any countenance unto theſe men, whatever they pretended; and he does it by a very plain evidence. Had he preached circumciſion, the offence given the Jews by the croſs of Chriſt, or preaching the goſpel, muſt have ceaſed. What made it ſo odious to them was the juſt apprehenſion, that it was calculated to ſet aſide the whole temple-ſervice, and would of courſe put an end to all the honours and diſtinctions they were poſſeſſed of, and reduce the high-prieſts and rulers, their ſcribes and doctors of the law, to a level with common men. For if theſe diſtinctions could have been ſecured to them, believing in Chriſt and his ſpiritual kingdom would have given them no trouble; and the circumciſed Gentiles would have been received as proſelytes, and incorporated into their nation. Accordingly they who thus

ſubmitted

ſubmitted had no more trouble. But this was by no means the Apoſtle's caſe: he ſtill ſuffered perſecution from that people, and was the peculiar butt of their rage and malice; and thus they ſhowed themſelves to be the genuine children of the bond woman; for *he that was born after the fleſh, perſecuted him that was born after the Spirit.*

Throughout the epiſtle, the Apoſtle, in his reſentment he had ſhown againſt the wicked attempts made by the falſe teachers, and eſpecially in the concluding part, had ſhown at the ſame time the warmeſt zeal for the welfare and happineſs of the churches of Galatia. In the following 13th verſe, he gives his reaſon, and at the ſame time makes a tranſition to the duties of the Chriſtian life, by a very neceſſary caution againſt the abuſe of their liberty.

The reaſon he gives for his great earneſtneſs and ſeverity againſt the oppoſers is a good one: The beliveing Galatians *were called unto liberty.* The very ſame our Lord ſpeaks of to the refractory Jews, *If the Son make you free, then are ye free indeed.* It was the glorious liberty of the ſons of God; a liberty, which it coſt the Son of God very dear to procure for an inſlaved world, no leſs than

his

his own precious blood. What madneſs then muſt it have been to entertain a thought of giving up any the leaſt part of it. But they were called into this liberty, and entered upon it by the ſpecial order and gift of God: and ſurely too much ſeverity can never be ſhown againſt ſuch as ſet themſelves againſt God, and attempt to diſannul his orders, and rob his people of the moſt valuable gift they were capable of receiving from his hand.

But the beſt gifts a creature can receive may be abuſed; and in the hands of ſuch a creature as man is, can hardly miſs to be ſo. None of Adam's children can pretend to be half ſo well provided as he was in his primitive ſtate, until they are found in Chriſt; in whom indeed they are complete. But the Apoſtle was by no means ſingular in what he ſaid, Rom. vii. 18. *In me*, that is, *in my fleſh, dwells no good thing*. If we advert carefully to his expreſſion, we will eaſily perceive, that it was not the corruption of human nature he meant, but nature itſelf, the human fabric and conſtitution: for it is in that which either good or evil dwells; the ſame which our Lord ſpeaks of, *That which is born of the fleſh*

is

is flesh. This, as it is conveyed down from Adam by ordinary generation, is weak and feeble, and, what is worse, destitute of that spirit which only can make such a creature capable of living as spirits ought to do: And though sharing deeply in the sin and punishment of the first father of all; yet when it is born into this world; it can neither be said to be good or evil; until it begins to act; and our felt wants; and the objects around us, engage our attention, and draw out our affections and passions, or, which is the same thing, our appetites, cravings, and longings, which go under the general name of *lusts*, in our translation of the Bible. These are the lusts of the *flesh* and the *mind*, Eph. ii. 3. and these two take in the whole man; and it is through these same lusts that corruption comes into the world, 2 Pet. i. 4. The Apostle James gives us the whole process, James i. 13. 14. 15. The man is tempted when his lusts and cravings are drawn out by external objects. He is carried away, and his lusts conceive and bring forth sin, and that brings forth death. Thus every child of Adam continues

tinues dead, and with the worſt kind of death, "dead in treſpaſſes and ſins."

As man is born the furtheſt from a ſelf-ſufficient being of all that we have any knowledge of, the beſt account that can be made of him is abſolute emptineſs. He has every thing neceſſary for the ſupport of life, and the enjoyment of it, to take in from without, and no faculties or powers to diſcern between good and evil, until he learns it by experience or inſtruction. No wonder then that he is often miſtaken, and miſled by outward appearances, to miſtake evil for good, and good for evil; being at the ſame time ſo made, that uſe and cuſtom eaſily and inſenſibly grow into a habit. But this, when once formed, is very hard to be got rid of: perfect wiſdom has declared it as hard as *for the Ethiopian to change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots*. And there it is that the ſtrength of natural corruption lies. Cuſtom forms the taſte; and what ſuits that, gives pleaſure; what does not, gives pain more or leſs. And hence every man is provided with a ſtandard by which good and evil is weighed, and all his cravings and purſuits are adjuſted; but far from the truth.

By this one may eaſily ſee how every thing that favours the darling purſuit will be eagerly graſped at, and no pains will be ſpared to get rid of every thing that croſſes it. The law of God, the ſtandard of perfect wiſdom, is the great obſtacle, and no pains will be ſpared to bring it down to a conſiſtency with our wiſhes. No engine has been found more ſucceſsful, and more employed this way, than *Chriſtian liberty*, ill underſtood; and thence very commonly carried quite beyond the bounds the great author of it deſigned. As he has ſtated it, nothing can be imagined a more rational mean, or near ſo likely to reconcile the heart to God, and plant the law of love there; that is, to lay a ſure foundation for holineſs in heart and life. But the fleſh, the natural human fabric, corrupted as it is by luſt and natural ignorance, knows not how to diſtinguiſh between liberty and licentiouſneſs, and *turns the very grace of God into laſciviouſneſs*, Jude, ℣ 4. And thus the grace of God, which brings ſalvation, and this higheſt inſtance of it, which has it in its very nature to teach us to *deny ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly,*

righteouſly, and godly, is ſhamefully perverted and abuſed, to make poor thoughtleſs ſinners careleſs and ſecure in the way to utter deſtruction.

What the Apoſtle directs to in oppoſition to this unhappy abuſe, and as the genuine tendency of that liberty wherewith Chriſt makes his diſciples and followers free, deſerves our ſerious attention. It is *to ſerve one another in love*. Thoſe who know any thing of what love is, will eaſily perceive that this is no more than extending our Lord's laſt command to his diſciples, *to love one another*, into its proper and neceſſary conſequences. The Apoſtle John, the beloved diſciple, extends it far, *even to lay down our lives for the brethren*; and yet it is no more than Paul ſays, when he directs Chriſtians to love one another, as Chriſt loved them. But love, where it is true and ſincere, ſticks at nothing that can any how ſerve thoſe whom we love.

By the connection in which the Apoſtle places this precept, he directs us to the true ſource and ſpring of it, and indeed the only one that can anſwer the purpoſe. The relation which thoſe who ſhare in this liberty are entered into, it is the li-

berty of the ſons of God. He is their Father, and they are all brethren in Chriſt; and of all brethren, they are moſt bound to love as brethren. All men are born brethren, the children of one man; and there is nothing in human nature to make them hate one another, until it be corrupted through luſt, the love of a preſent world. That indeed makes not only ſeparate, but oppoſite intereſts, and makes them appear as enemies to one another. It is true, all the children of God are heirs of one and the ſame inheritance; but ſo much of a different nature from worldly ones, that the number of co-heirs, inſtead of leſſening, greatly increaſes their enjoyment. Their Father is their inheritance; and in the ſame proportion as the knowledge and love of God riſes toward perfection, the love of the world diminiſhes, until it goes for nothing, and conſequently nothing is left to fall out about, and the brethren dwell together in perfect unity.

It will be proper to obſerve too, that this ſame liberty carries in it a releaſe, not only from the curſe of the law, and the death which they were bound under, but likewiſe that baſeſt of all bondage,

ſlavery

ſlavery to fooliſh and hurtful luſts: the ſpirit of ſons, the very Spirit and life of Chriſt dwells in them; and the love of God determines them effectually to all the labour of love; for all the law is fulfilled in one word, *Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thy ſelf*, verſ. 14. It muſt be ſo: for it neceſſarily infers our Lord's general rule, "That whatever we would that "men ſhould do to us, we ſhould do the "ſame to them;" and that as plainly implies the negative, that we ſhould never do any thing to another which we would not have done to ourſelves in the ſame circumſtances. Rules ſo plain and expreſs, that it has been found impoſſible to explain them away; though none but a right Chriſtian, that is, one who has the love of God ruling in his heart, and conſequently is dead to a preſent world, will ever chuſe to practiſe. The word which we render *ſerving one another*, has a much ſtronger meaning than what we affix to *ſerving one*; it imports no leſs than *giving one's ſelf a bond-ſervant*, ſo as to have no power left to diſpoſe of ourſelves, or our labour any other way, much leſs to have it at our option, whether to ſerve them

or

or not. Our ſovereign proprietor and Lord has bound us in the ſtrongeſt terms to this ſervice: and whatever might be pleaded for our independency, or being under no obligation to thoſe he has bound us to ſerve, nay, and though they were our profeſſed enemies, muſt go for nothing in this caſe; to him we are bound, and muſt obey.

Thoſe who know no other fund of pleaſure or happineſs, but what can be picked up in a preſent world, will reckon theſe hard ſayings, which they think no body can bear; and many a ſhift is made to bring them down to our ſtandard. But thoſe who have overcome the world, are quite of a different opinion. The commandments of God are ſo far from being grievous, that they are the joy of their heart; for they know the lawgiver is wiſe and good; ſo good, that he gives no commands but what are neceſſary for their happineſs; and ſo wiſe, that he can never be miſtaken; and he forbids nothing but what has a tendency to their deſtruction. We cannot remit any thing of the law of love, without running in ſome degree into what the Apoſtle here warns againſt,

biting

biting and devouring one another. The word he uſes properly ſignifies *eating up*, and ſeems to be taken from what God ſays, Pſal. xiv. 4. of the wicked, "that they eat "up his people as bread;" and the event of courſe was, that they were in the utmoſt danger of being *conſumed one of another*; ſo ſignificant is the expreſſion, that it is become a common term in our language, denoting at once the injuſtice and baſeneſs of taking the advantage, either of our neighbour's ignorance or neceſſities, ſo as to trick and impoſe on them: they hurt their neighbours in temporal things, and deſtroy themſelves eternally.

But how ſhall men, in their preſent circumſtances, made for this world, and formed upon the cuſtoms and faſhions of it, and of courſe, under the influence of their natural appetites and cravings, and, if we believe the Apoſtle, inſlaved to them, and thence living in envy at leaſt, if not as enemies, hateful to, and hating one another; how ſhall creatures in ſuch circumſtances be brought to love one another, ſo as to ſerve one another as they do themſelves? It has been thought, could the affections and paſſions be once brought under

under the direction of the mind, the thing might be done, and reaſon would be able to over-balance all their irregular ſallies, and cure all that corruption which is found in them, or occaſioned by them; and thus they conſtruct what the Apoſtle ſays, verſ. 17. of the contrariety and oppoſition there is between the *fleſh* and *ſpirit luſting againſt one another*. But the experience of the world ſhows beyond contradiction, how unequally matched the combatants are, and how almoſt univerſally the fleſh prevails. And it cannot be otherwiſe: for all that reaſon can do, is by comparing and balancing the motives on both ſides, and urging thoſe which appear of greateſt weight; it may recommend, but has neither power nor authority to make the ſentence effectual, nor even light enough to give a convincing verdict; the principal motives lie out of its reach in the divine teſtimony, and faith only can bring them fairly into the field, ſo as to ſet them on a level with ſenſe and feeling.

When the Apoſtle then directs Chriſtians, ℣ 16. to *walk in the Spirit*, it muſt be ſomething more than that natural princi-

ple

ple of reaſon which qualifies men for managing their worldly affairs, and can be no leſs than that new divine principle of life, which Chriſt, by the word of the goſpel, conveys into the dead children of Adam in the new birth, whereby he lives in them, and they become new creatures, the children of the living God; and are qualified to live in love, as it becomes the brethren of Jeſus Chriſt, *who loved them, and gave himſelf for them.* I need not ſay again, that this ſame *new creature*, can neither ſubſiſt, nor act, ſeparated from Jeſus Chriſt, in whom its ſpirit and life, with all its ſpiritual powers, are lodged; and thence continually ſupported and ſupplied. In this view it is eaſy to ſee, how the *ſpirit* and *fleſh* muſt be contrary to one another; and all their appetites and cravings, and all the affections and paſſions, muſt be ſo likewiſe. The Apoſtle gives us a fair view of them, Rom. vii. as two different laws contending for the ſuperiority, the one reſiding in his fleſh, and the other in his mind; which we need not ſtay to illuſtrate.

Here then we have two agents, the *fleſh*

and *ſpirit*, the ſame with the old and new man, the child of Adam, and the child of God. We have likewiſe a Spirit of a higher order, the Spirit of Chriſt conveying and ſupporting the life of the ſpirit: and though there is no mention of it here, we are told of another ſpirit, *that works in the children of diſobedience*. Thus we are told of *living in the ſpirit*, and *walking in the ſpirit*. The *fleſh* is ſaid *to work*; but though the *ſpirit*, or new creature, is not idle, all its works are produced by that *Spirit* which dwells and abides in true believers: hence they are called *fruits of the Spirit*, and all the honour of them belongs to the giver of that *Spirit*, who worketh all their works in them. When therefore the *fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit*, and *the ſpirit againſt the fleſh*, the conflict is really between the *good* and *evil ſpirit*; and one needs not ſay on which ſide the victory will fall. The Apoſtle tells us, that the upſhot of the ſtruggle is, *that they do not the things that they would*, for ſo the original words run; and our tranſlators had no reaſon, that I can ſee, for putting in *cannot*, which is not in the Greek text. They ſeem to have thought, that their mind was kept in ſuch an equal

poiſe

poiſe between the two oppoſite principles, that whatever ſide their will fixed on by the one, they were croſſed, and their reſolutions made ineffectual by the other. But whatever truth there may be in that, it does not ſeem to be the mind of the Apoſtle in this place; on the contrary, he exhorts to *walk in the Spirit*, with this aſſurance, *that they ſhould not fulfil the luſts of the fleſh*; and however the *fleſh* might be, as indeed it frequently is, ſo ſtrong as to captivate and engage the will, and blind the underſtanding, yet it cannot make out a complete victory. The Spirit puts a ſtop to the progreſs; and though the fleſh and mind be both on a ſide, faith, under the conduct and aſſiſtance of the Spirit, brings both into a due ſubjection.

From theſe hints it will not be hard to gather the true meaning of the Apoſtle's exhortation, to *walk in the Spirit*. He gives us a guide to it, verſ. 25. and, at the ſame time, a ſtrong reaſon for complying with it: *If*, ſaith he, *we live in the Spirit, let us alſo walk in the Spirit*. The *Spirit* is the principle of the new creature's life. The giving and uniting the *Spirit* of Chriſt with the *ſpirit* of man, conſtitutes

the new creature: he is the Spirit of truth, and leads into all truth, and is conſequently the leading directing principle of all the actings of life; he is the Spirit of Chriſt, by which all grace is conveyed from that all-ſufficient grace which is in him; and our Lord gives it as the end of his ſending him, "that he ſhould take of "his, and ſhew it, convey it, to his diſ-"ciples." *To live in the Spirit* then muſt be the ſame thing as to live in Chriſt, and that is the ſame thing as to have Chriſt living in us; for they are ſo cloſely connected, that they cannot be ſeparated: And thus the exhortation runs into that which this ſame apoſtle gives on another occaſion, *As ye have received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, ſo walk in him*; that is to ſay, ſeeing ye live on that grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus, and can do nothing without him, i. e. without his Spirit, let it be your care to follow the leading of that Spirit, to live and walk by the faith of Jeſus Chriſt, and a dutiful dependence on him.

We obſerved before, how the Apoſtle repreſents the *fleſh* as an agent; and by the detail he here gives us of its *works*, we find they are really the works of the *man*, while he continues, as the Apoſtle

Jude

Jude deſcribes the mere child of Adam, *ſenſual, having not the Spirit.* As theſe works are but too well known, it will be needleſs to ſtand on defining them. Only it may be proper to obſerve how he ranks them, as himſelf had diſtinguiſhed them on another occaſion, *into the luſts of the fleſh*, producing merely ſenſual works; and thoſe of the *mind*, of a more ſpiritual kind. The firſt ſinks the noble creature even below the brutes; and the other forms them into the very image of the devil. He begins and ends his catalogue with the firſt, the product of fleſhly luſt; ſins committed through the ſtrength of fleſhly or bodily luſt, the abuſe of our natural conſtitution; which are ſo groſs, that no body can miſs to perceive them, but ſuch as are abſolutely hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin. The luſts of the *mind*, viz. *wrath, ſtrife*, &c. do not ariſe ſo much from any thing in the conſtitution diſpoſing men thereto, as from their circumſtances in the world, and intereſts, jarring and interfering with one another, and all ſpringing from the love of a preſent world, and ignorance of any thing better to overbalance it.

There

There are two, which it is hard to ſay whether they belong to the *fleſh*, or the *mind*, or whether they ought not to ſtand in a claſs by themſelves: and though many of the reſt have been extenuated, and in ſome meaſure excuſed, yet theſe are the only two which have been diſputed; they are *idolatry*, and what our tranſlators render *witchcraft*. The firſt, all agree to condemn in general terms; and particularly the groſs idolatry of the Heathen nations; but are greatly divided about what is, and what is not, juſtly deſigned by that name. I believe the Apoſtle's definition of it, Rom. i. 25. is the beſt, *worſhipping and ſerving the creature more than the creator*; on which, I preſume, it is that he calls covetouſneſs *idolatry*. And there is a plain reaſon for it, viz. that the covetous man ſhows a greater regard to the world than he does to God; or, in other words, loves it better than God. And love, we know, is not only ſo neceſſary an ingredient in divine worſhip, that there can be no ſuch thing as worſhip where it is wanting, but is itſelf the higheſt worſhip. On the ſame grounds we muſt ſay, that every ſinner is an idolater: for no man will diſobey God, when

when nothing is to be made by it; nor in any caſe, but where the ſoul is ſunk into ſuch an habitual neglect of him, as one will rather venture God's diſpleaſure, and all that may follow upon it, than the loſs of what he propoſeth to make by the ſin. In this light *covetouſneſs* ſtands, which, though confined into narrow bounds in our language, yet the original word takes in all the irregular appetites or luſtings which brings forth ſin. This ſame unlawful luſting is a groſſer and more inexcuſable idolatry, than that of the moſt ignorant Heathens. What they worſhipped, they took to be the true God; but the wilful ſinner worſhips what he knows is but the baſeſt of his creatures.

As for what our tranſlators have rendered *witchcraft*, ſome have beſtowed much learned labour to dwindle it away into the art of poiſoning, or ſome piece of ignorant ſuperſtition; and to perſuade the world, that there never was any ſuch correſpondence between the devil and deluded mortals as has gone commonly under the name of *witchcraft*. And the ſame arguments, if there was any ſtrength in them,

them, would perſuade us, that the numerous inſtances the evangeliſts give us of the poſſeſſion of evil ſpirits, were no more than natural diſeaſes, or the effects of diſtempered fancies. The word, as we find it uſed by Heathen writers, denotes ſuch as uſed ſpells and incantations, and either did, or at leaſt pretended to do, great things by them; ſuch as, curing diſeaſes, &c.; which, as they had no connection with natural cauſes, muſt have been done by inviſible powers, demons, or devils. Such were their divinations and oracles, which it cannot be made appear were all mere cheats; and which could not ſubſiſt without either a direct or implicit compact with devils. And thus the two go fitly together; worſhipping the world, and worſhipping the devil, more than God bleſſed for evermore.

The order in which the Apoſtle lays theſe works of the *fleſh*, merits our attention. By indulging theſe fleſhly luſts in *adultery*, *fornication*, *uncleanneſs*, *and laſciviouſneſs*, the ſoul is ſo degraded and debaſed below the ſimple animal life, and ſo ſunk in corruption, that it can reliſh nothing

nothing, not to ſay of the pure ſpiritual pleaſures to be found in the favour, friendſhip, and love of God, but ſuch as human reaſon would recommend, viz. the intercourſes of love and friendſhip among men. Hence they are inſenſibly plunged deeper and deeper in the love of a preſent world, and that, we are well informed, is *enmity againſt God*. The only tie which can unite and keep men together is broken; and while every one graſps what he can of the unſatisfying pleaſures of a preſent world, the deviliſh ſymptoms neceſſarily break out, viz. *wrath*, *ſtrife*, *ſeditions*, and *running into diviſions and parties*; (for that is the true import of the word which we have formed out of the Greek, and call *hereſies*); and the native effects of party-ſpirit, *envyings*, *murders*, and lands in the moſt unnatural vices, *drunkenneſs* and *revellings*; as if they wanted, of all things, to extinguiſh thoſe glimmerings of reaſon our kind creator has been pleaſed to indulge us with, in order to receive the inſtructions he has favoured us with in his bleſſed Son, by whom he has condeſcended to ſpeak to us in theſe laſt times. And ſurely there was great reaſon to expect that God's creatures,

who abſolutely depended on him, would reverence his Son; eſpecially when he came upon ſuch a gracious errand as to be their Saviour.

I forgot to take notice of one ſpecies of idolatry, which has always been, (and never more than now), avowedly propagated by the men who are the patrons of what they call *natural religion.* It is dreſſing up a philoſophical idol, ſuch as never had a being, and putting it in the place of the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And much pains has been taken to perſuade us, that the Heathen *Jupiter* was the very ſame true God with *Jehovah*, whom the Jews did, and the Chriſtians now do, worſhip; and that all the noiſe which has been made about their worſhipping falſe gods is without any foundation. Indeed I believe it will not be very eaſy to find any eſſential difference between what they call *God*, and *Baal*, the grand idol of the nations of Canaan.

The *new creature*, that which is born of the Spirit, the *new man*, born not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God, is not, cannot be idle: for *he is the workmanſhip of God, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good*

good works, which God hath prepared before all ages for them to walk in. But the Apoſtle knew better things than to make uſe of the ſame way of ſpeaking which he had done in the other caſe. When he had laboured more abundantly than all the other apoſtles, he durſt not aſſume the honour of the work: "It was not he, but the grace "of God in him." So here, though it is very evident, that what he here mentions are really the qualities and actions of the *renewed man*, yet he calls them not *his works*, but *the fruits of that Spirit*, which the renewed man had received. Our Lord brought in this way of ſpeaking, in the image he gives of the vine and branches; and it is a very proper one. The branches carry the fruit; but it is the ſap conveyed from the root through the trunk of the vine to which all their fruitfulneſs is owing. The firſt we find of theſe fruits is *love:* and with great juſtice it is placed firſt; for all the reſt are no more but the native conſequences and actings of it. Thus we find this Apoſtle repreſenting this ſubſtantial fruit, 1 Cor. xiii. throughout, where he has ſaid every thing that is needful on the ſubject. Nor do I need to ſhew how they come to

be called *the fruits of the Spirit*, when they all flow from that grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus; for it is by his Spirit that all this grace is conveyed to the believer.

One may juſtly wonder how it ſhould ever have entered into the head of any one who had ſeen the Bible to ſeparate morality, (as ſocial duties eſpecially are called), into a human ſcience; and yet more, to ſend their pupils to the Heathen philoſophers to learn it: and, moſt of all, how this ſhould be made an eſſential part of education in Chriſtian ſchools, when we are ſo ſolemnly taught, that the love of God is the only foundation on which morality can ſtand, and ſuch a foundation as neceſſarily produces all the duties which belong to it in an incomparably more perfect manner; as much more perfect as the law of God, written in the heart, is more perfect than the dry precepts and trifling motives of philoſophy, and the chicane of metaphyſical reaſoning, which may fill the head, but can never reach the heart, regulate the paſſions, and form the conduct of life; and, leaſt of all, enable one to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil. However the pride of philoſophy may flatter

its

its votaries, the Apoſtle may be preſumed to have underſtood the human ſtate and conſtitution rather better than they; for he had an infinitely better teacher, that Spirit which made ours, and endued them with all thoſe perfections and powers which we thoughtleſsly value ourſelves upon, as if they were abſolutely our own property.

We muſt not overlook the event and iſſue of theſe very different works of the *fleſh*, and fruits of the *Spirit*, as the Apoſtle here ſtates them. The firſt ought to be carefully conſidered by us; and the rather, that we find him expreſsly declaring, verſ. 21. *that they who do ſuch things ſhall not inherit the kingdom of God.* We need not ſtand to obſerve, what is allowed by every body, that the kingdom of God denotes the ſtate of the children of God, and the inheritance which belongs unto them as ſuch; the ſame with the kingdom of the Meſſiah, and very generally uſed in that ſenſe in the days of our Lord and his apoſtles. It appears to have taken its riſe from the prophet Daniel's interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. ii. 44. and accordingly made uſe of in the firſt publication of the goſpel,

goſpel, *The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Hence it is called the *goſpel*, or *good news of the kingdom:* and our Lord comforts his diſciples by this, that it is his Father's good pleaſure to give them the kingdom: and the Apoſtle to the Hebrews ſays plainly of all believers, that *they had received the kingdom which cannot be moved.* Nor will any body be at a loſs to apprehend how the kingdom of Chriſt ſhould be called theirs, who conſiders that intimate union which ſubſiſts between Chriſt and them, and that the conſtitution and whole management of his kingdom is for their benefit, and not his own, who needs it not; that they are ſet down with him upon his throne, and ſhare with him in all the honours of his kingdom. It is the ſame with eternal life, which is but another word for the glory, honour, and immortality, which all who are in Chriſt poſſeſs in proſpect and hope, and will be entered into the full poſſeſſion of, when he ſhall appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation.

This gives the foundation for diſtinguiſhing the kingdom as it ſubſiſts in a preſent world, from what it will be after the reſurrection, when it ſhall ſtand pure and

and unſullied with the luſtings of the fleſh againſt the ſpirit, by the titles of *grace* and of *glory*; which yet muſt not be ſo underſtood, as if *grace* did not ſubſiſt and ſhine forth in the laſt as well as the firſt. That thoſe who do ſuch things cannot enter into either of them, the Apoſtle's authority is ſufficient aſſurance: for it is no more but the declaration of the teſtimony of God, and that by his ſpecial direction and command; and to ſay the thing as it is, if what the prophets and apoſtles teſtify in God's name is received on any other ground but the teſtimony of God, it is not, cannot be reckoned *faith*. But in this caſe we have all the authority of reaſon, improved and enlightened as it is by the inſtruction God has graciouſly given us, that in every view we can take of theſe ſame works of the fleſh, the concluſion will come out ſtrong, *that they who do ſuch things, cannot inherit the kingdom of God.*

On the other hand, thoſe who bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, as theſe are of a nature directly contrary to the other, ſo they have a contrary iſſue. He does not ſay directly, that ſuch as do theſe things ſhall enter into the kingdom of heaven;

heaven; but he ſays what is equivalent to it, and what moreover carries the ſtrongeſt aſſurance that they ſhall not, nay, and that they cannot enter into condemnation; for he ſays, *there is no law againſt them.* It is the ſame caſe which this ſame apoſtle put, Rom. viii. 1. "There is "therefore now no condemnation to thoſe "who are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not "after the fleſh, but after the Spirit."

What he adds there, "that the law of the "Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, had made "them free from the law of ſin and death," explains what he ſays here, verſ. 18. *that thoſe who are led by the Spirit, are not under the law.* They who are in Chriſt, are dead to the law, through the body of Chriſt, and raiſed up in him to a new ſtation, and have a new principle of action; they are directed and led by the Spirit. And when it appears, by the fruits of the Spirit, that they are ſo, the law has nothing to ſay to them; they are, as we may ſay, out of its juriſdiction, and are under another government; where the meaſures of judgement, both in juſtifying and condemning, are altogether different; "He who believeth and is baptized, ſhall

"be

"be ſaved; and he who believeth not, "ſhall be damned." The law had its courſe on Jeſus Chriſt, and in him, on all who are made conformable unto him in his death, and has no more to ſay to them. They are left dead in the hands of their great creator, and are quickened by his ſovereignly free grace: for ſurely no body will pretend, that God was under any the leaſt obligation to employ his creating power to raiſe any of the apoſtate race; and if he was bound to none, he may quicken whom he will; and none can complain of being injured, when he leaves them where they have choſen to be.

But this ſame ſovereignty of grace, where-ever it is exerted, is ſo far from inferring the concluſion which ſome, who reckon themſelves very wiſe, very ignorantly faſten upon it, viz. that it encourages men to continue in ſin, and neglect the ſtudy of holineſs; that it is abſolutely impoſſible for thoſe who have *taſted* of the grace of God in truth to draw any ſuch concluſion from it. It is true, the external doctrine of grace may be, and has been, turned into wantonneſs; but that is only grace in the *theory*: but where-ever it is

received, and entertained in the heart, it teaches men effectually *to deny ungodlineſs and wordly luſts.* The Apoſtle gives the reaſon, Rom. vi. 2.—11. and the ſame truth he inculcates here, verſ. 24. *they that are Chriſt's, have crucified the fleſh, with the luſts and affections of it.* He does not ſay barely, they have crucified the affections and luſts, but the *fleſh* itſelf, "in which no good thing can dwell," the old man whoſe deeds theſe are: and moſt certainly they are the deeds of the man, the child of Adam; and in theſe he will employ himſelf until he is born again, and created anew in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, by the Spirit of Chriſt *living and abiding in him.* It is by this *Spirit* he lives; and no conſequence can be ſtronger than that which we have, verſ. 25. *If we live in* or by *the Spirit, let us alſo walk in* or by *the Spirit.* I put it thus, becauſe the Greek particle is uſed for both, and often rendered by our tranſlators either *in* or *by*, as they judged the place and matter required.

After what has been ſaid upon this ſubject, it might be juſtly deemed ſuperfluous to take any notice of a ſet of men who make no difference between the ſpiritual, and the rational or ſenſual world.

They

They ſeem to imagine, that man is ſuch a perfect being, and endued with ſomething ſo near ſelf-ſufficiency, that he has no need of the Spirit of Chriſt, or even of Chriſt himſelf; for he and his Spirit are but one. When the Apoſtle therefore ſays, *Chriſtians, live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit*, they think he means no more by the Spirit but the rational ſoul, the ſpiritual part of the man; in the ſtrength of which they ſeem to have no doubt but that they ſhall regulate all their affections with ſuch exactneſs, that God himſelf muſt be pleaſed with them, and reward them more liberally, than Adam, in the utmoſt purity of his innocence, had any reaſon to expect. We know the Chriſtian "can do all "things, through Chriſt ſtrengthening "him." But let theſe men ſeriouſly try what they can do without him, and they will ſoon find themſelves ſo ſtrongly bound under ſin and death, that nothing but the hand of omnipotence can looſe them; or in the Apoſtle's words, *that the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus*, and that *alone, can make them free from the law of ſin and death*: they will feel, on the firſt ſerious attempt, what

they will not take the Apoſtle's word for, *that they are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

As the grace of God in Chriſt Jeſus is the fund, and only fund, out of which the children of God are, or can be, provided in the proper ſupply of all their wants, and relieved from their numerous weakneſſes and infirmities, one may eaſily ſee, how the Chriſtian *walks in the Spirit.* In general it is no more than exerting the proper actings of life, which we commonly call *living*, or *employing the vital ſpirit to its proper purpoſes*; as we may obſerve in our preſent life, which is indeed no more but a ſhadowy repreſentation or image of that perfect and true life conveyed and maintained by the Spirit of Chriſt. And if we want a more particular view of it, we need only conſider the promiſes of the Spirit, and the purpoſes which that unſpeakable gift is deſigned to anſwer; and then it will appear, that in our preſent ſituation, where we cannot have acceſs to walk by ſight, *to walk in the Spirit* is the ſame thing as to walk *in the faith* of theſe declarations and promiſes; which faith the Apoſtle aſſures us, gives ſubſiſtence to things not ſeen, and clear evidence to things

things hoped for, and thus preſents them with the ſame certainty as if we ſaw them with our eyes, Heb. xi. 1.

In this light there is nothing left us to value ourſelves upon, or to boaſt and glory in. By the grace of God we are what we are; and it is his Spirit that works all our works in us. Whatſoever therefore exceeds Paul's eſtimation of all that he had done, expreſſed in theſe words, "yet not I, "but the grace of God, or Chriſt in me," muſt be *vain-glory*, that is, valuing or boaſting ourſelves in what we have no title to. Our Lord ſpeaks of honour that comes from men, and that which comes from God only. The firſt, however it is courted, valued, and even boaſted of, can ſerve no other purpoſes but a preſent world; and in the opinion of one of the wiſeſt of mere men, and who had tried it moſt thoroughly, is no more but vanity and vexation of ſpirit; and all the pains that is taken about it, is but labouring for the wind. It muſt be ſo in the ſight of God, and all perfect ſpirits, who are always of his mind; ſomething rather more ſilly upon the main, than what we laugh at our children for: nor can there be any honour worth minding but what comes from God only.

only. But there is ſomething in this *vain-glory* yet greatly worſe: it is plainly robbing God, by intercepting and appropriating to ourſelves the honour which belongs to him, and that grace which he hath treaſured up in his bleſſed Son for the proviſion of his children, and that Spirit whoſe peculiar buſineſs it is to convey it to them. I but juſt obſerve, that our tranſlators recede ſomewhat from the Apoſtle's injunction, as he has left it. They conſtruct it as if it was directed only againſt the *deſire* of vain-glory; but he ſays ſimply, *not vain-glorious*, directing his caution againſt the thing itſelf, wherever any degree of it is found.

The propriety, and even the neceſſity, of ſuch a caution, appears further from what the Apoſtle joins with it; and which he connects ſo cloſely with it, that wherever this ſame *vain-glory* is found, *provoking one another*, and *envying one another* naturally follow. There is hardly any thing more *provoking*, than boaſting of any advantage we have, or ſeem to have, over our neighbours; and, if there is any foundation for it, more ready to draw out *envy*. Theſe are works of the *fleſh*, which it ſtands

ſtands always ready to produce on any the ſlighteſt temptation. But of all others the heart of the vain-glorious man is ready to riſe againſt every competitor, and eſpecially ſuch as may be deemed to deſerve better than he; nor is there any cure but humility and lowlineſs of mind.

CHAP. vi. 1.—— 10.

1. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are ſpiritual, reſtore ſuch an one in the ſpirit of meekneſs; conſidering thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* 2. *Bear ye one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law of Chriſt.* 3. *For if a man think himſelf to be ſomething, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himſelf.* 4. *But let every man prove his own work, and then ſhall he have rejoicing in himſelf alone, and not in another.* 5. *For every man ſhall bear his own burden.* 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth, in all good things.* 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo reap.* 8. *For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: but he that ſoweth to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.* 9. *And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.* 10. *As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſehold of faith.*

THE Apoſtle, in the cloſe of the foregoing chapter, had given a general rule, which, could it be ſtrictly adhered to,

to, would be abundantly ſufficient to ſecure all the particular duties of the Chriſtian life: it is, that Chriſtians ſhould *walk in the Spirit, as they live in the Spirit*. By that *Spirit* the law of God, as he has given it, is written on the heart, and thus they become a law to themſelves: for the Apoſtle John aſſures us, "that he "who is born of God, doth not commit "ſin;" for this good reaſon, "that the ſeed "of God abides in him." He is made for good works; and theſe are the only ones he finds his pleaſure in. But the Apoſtle knew very well, that every man, even the beſt Chriſtian, while abiding in theſe bodies of fleſh, *has a law in his members, warring againſt the law which is in the mind*, and often carrying him captive. He knew likewiſe, that there was in every child of Adam a certain meaſure of vanity often founded in a notion of excellency, purely imaginary, which prompts them to claim a proportional ſhare in the good opinion of thoſe about them, the very thing he calls *vain-glory*; and which he knew was the occaſion of all or moſt of the differences, eſpecially of that *envy* which is the root of all evil. And could that be prevented, and men brought to a proper meaſure

meaſure of tenderneſs and concern for one another's eaſe and quiet, or, which is the ſame thing, *to love one another as Chriſt has loved us*, they would no more be in danger of *biting and eating up one another*.

Of all things, they would be in the leaſt danger of *rejoicing in evil*; and being pleaſed to get an ill tale to tell of their neighbours. The Apoſtle directs here to a very contrary courſe. *When a brother is overtaken in a fault*, it will not be ſufficient to forbear inſulting him, and rejoicing over him, which is ſo much the way of the world, but they muſt make it their buſineſs *to reſtore him*. The original word is very ſignificant: it is to reſtore a diſlocated member to its proper place and poſition. All Chriſtians are members of the body of Chriſt, by their union to him their head, and conſequently members one of another; and every member has its proper place and uſe in the body, as the Apoſtle elegantly repreſents it, Rom. xii. 4. 5. and 1 Cor. xii. 12. *& ſeqq.*

The injunction is directed to thoſe who are *ſpiritual*, to ſuch as are *born of the Spirit, who live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit; brethren in Chriſt, and are living members of his*

body. And indeed no body elſe will either have inclination or capacity for ſuch a work: for it is a work of that kind, as cannot be managed without all the affection and tenderneſs of a brother. They are to reſtore ſuch an one *in the ſpirit of meekneſs.* The firſt office of brotherly love is *faithfulneſs.* Not to ſuffer ſin upon our brother, but by all means to rebuke him, was a precept of the law of Moſes, Lev. xix. 17.; and what is very remarkable, the neglect of it is called *hating one's brother in his heart.* The hatred may not be ſo direct as to wiſh him ill, much leſs to do him ill: but it certainly argues a want of that due concern, and brotherly love which is always watchful for our brother's good, and much more againſt his ſuffering any damage which we can prevent; and ſin unrepented of is without all doubt the greateſt damage one can ſuſtain. By no means may he be ſuffered to go on without being rebuked: not in the manner ignorant zealots rebuke, as lords over God's heritage, who treat every little difference, by the ſtandard they have made for themſelves, as an enormous crime; but in the ſpirit of meekneſs, that it may appear

that

that pure love, and tender brotherly affection to the party, is the only motive.

The Apoſtle gives a good reaſon for this mild conduct; and if it is in the leaſt reflected on, will moſt certainly be effectual. It is this, that no man can be ſure that he will not ſome time or other fall into temptation, and even fall under it: *Conſider thy ſelf, leſt thou alſo be tempted.* It is but the application of our Lord's rule, "to do as we would be done by in the "ſame circumſtances;" a ſhort plain rule, perfectly juſt and equitable; and ſo extenſive, that were it minded, every man would be in caſe to be a law unto himſelf.

But there is a principle deeply inlaid in the heart of every child of Adam, which puts a very great difference between himſelf and another; ſo great, that whenever the natural connections of blood or particular friendſhip wear out, the principle of humanity is well known to be a very ſlender tie. Strangers are ſuch as we reckon we are not concerned to mind: and not only thoſe Chriſtian duties of mutual concern mentioned, verſ. 1. but all the duties of humanity lie by neglected; and

the neglect is juſtified by that very common excuſe, that it is impertinent officiouſneſs to meddle in other people's affairs. However that may hold in worldly affairs among the men of the world, it can never be the caſe among Chriſtians. The connection among them is too cloſe to admit of any ſeparate intereſts. And the Apoſtle lays it down as a general rule, which admits of no exception, *to bear one another's burdens*. The ſame which he extends further, and lays ſtronger, 1 Cor. x. 24. *Let no man ſeek his own: but every man another's wealth*. One needs not ſay how much this reaches beyond bare ſympathizing with one another in our diſtreſſes and troubles. That is a very vain affection, if it does not engage us to exert our utmoſt efforts to relieve them. But the Chriſtian's concern for his brethren in Chriſt is not terminated ſolely in their burdens and diſtreſſes. All their concerns are his, and he ſtands as much bound to promote their intereſts and welfare as his own.

But it is not only a duty ariſing from their near relation, but it is what they ſtand bound to by expreſs commandment. *The law of Chriſt* cannot be *fulfilled* without

out it. There is no need of any laborious ſearch to find out this law of Chriſt; *it is the law of love.* It is true, all God's laws are his; and he is, in the moſt proper ſenſe, our lawgiver, as well as our king and judge. But what is moſt properly and peculiarly his law, is that which he commanded his diſciples, and preſſed on them by the love which he had ſhown them, *that they ſhould love one another*; and which he gave as the badge by which his diſciples ſhould be known and diſtinguiſhed from all the reſt of mankind. On this foundation the Apoſtle John, who well underſtood it, carries it ſo far, as that we *ought to lay down our lives for the brethren:* and ſurely then we ought *to bear their burdens*, and concern ourſelves in all their intereſts of every kind, and aſſiſt them to our utmoſt ability; for it is notoriouſly true, even though our Lord had never ſaid it, that *the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.*

The Apoſtle underſtood human nature perfectly in all the views it could be taken in; and particularly how apt men are to be pleaſed with themſelves, and even value themſelves greatly above what they deſerve. He knew likewiſe, that none of

Adam's

Adam's children had any thing to value themſelves upon, unleſs they received it from the free ſovereign grace of the creator; and that afforded them no matter of boaſting or glorying at all. Abraham himſelf had nothing in the ſight of God. It muſt then be a ſtrange kind of deluſion that can make ſuch a creature *think himſelf to be ſomething*. The Apoſtle's word ſeems as if it was made for the purpoſe. *He deceives* his own mind and underſtanding; the only faculty he has to keep him from being impoſed on, or deceived by others.

What the Apoſtle adds here as the only poſſible way of getting out of this ſelf-deception, is ſo much of a piece with the Apoſtle James's treatment of the man who ſaid he had faith while he had not works, that it plainly appears, that Paul and he were preciſely of the ſame mind, both with reſpect to juſtification by faith, and by works. How reſolute Paul was in the point of juſtification by faith alone, without any works of law whatſoever, no body needs be told who reads his epiſtles; and even here, where he may be thought to be on another ſubject, he appears to have it directly in his eye: for though

love

love is indeed the fulfilling of the whole law, and he might have ſaid ſo; yet that none might imagine he was directing them to a law of works, ſuch as that of Moſes, he tells them, it is the *law of Chriſt* he wanted them to *fulfil*, where the free ſovereign grant of grace is laid at the foundation of all their obedience. But this is ſo far from making their obedience leſs neceſſary, that it is the only way to make it practicable, and at the ſame time furniſhes the ſtrongeſt and moſt effectual motives; in compariſon of which, that which the Jewiſh law in the ten commandments was founded on, is but as a ſhadow to the ſubſtance.

To prevent then this dangerous ſelf-deceit, the Apoſtle's direction becomes abſolutely neceſſary, *that every man try and prove his own work.* Certain it is, he was once nothing; and if he now thinks himſelf to be ſomething, the firſt queſtion ſhould be, how he came to be ſo? Man, who made thee to differ from another? is a queſtion, if ſeriouſly conſidered, which will bring him down from the greateſt height of ſelf-conceit to his original level: and if he is indeed any thing, they muſt be the fruits of the Spirit that make him ſo; and theſe carry him

him to Chriſt, and the grace of God in him. But if theſe ſame fruits of the Spirit are not found in him, whatever his pretenſions may be, his faith will be found as vain, as the Apoſtle James calls it: and if faith in Chriſt is not laid at the foundation, if we do not love God and our neighbour, becauſe he loved us firſt, all the philoſophical virtue one can be poſſeſſed of will not be fulfilling the law of Chriſt. The man is ſtill nothing, or at beſt but a ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal, as the Apoſtle calls the moſt accompliſhed man who builds not on this foundation, whatever either himſelf or his neighbours may think of him.

It will be needleſs to obſerve, that when the Apoſtle directs every one to *prove his* own *work*, he does not mean that the bare trial, however juſt and impartial, ſhould give him that matter of *joy* or boaſting he ſpeaks of. All the purpoſe that can anſwer is to prevent his deceiving himſelf. But if he ſhall be found *nothing*, or ſomething worſe, the uſe of this diſcovery is to put him into the right way of getting the foundations ſo firmly laid, that his work may ſtand the ſevereſt ſcru-

tiny

tiny and trial: And the word the Apoſtle uſes ſeems to imply as much; for it ſignifies ſuch proving our own works, as may either find them, or make them approved; that is, ſuch as they ought to be, ſo as to ſtand the impartial judgement of God.

The encouragement the Apoſtle gives, or the argument he makes uſe of to engage all who profeſs themſelves Chriſtians to this very neceſſary duty, needs to be very carefully conſidered, as the ſound of the words ſeparately might tempt one to look for the matter of their rejoicing, and even boaſting *in themſelves*, and not in *another*; which has been, in a direct oppoſition to the Apoſtle's conſtant doctrine and practice, improved, or rather abuſed, to exclude even Chriſt himſelf. It may not be refuſed, that what the Apoſtle puts the matter of their rejoicing or glorying upon, is the ſame which the Apoſtle Peter calls the *anſwer of a good conſcience toward God:* for ſo this ſame Apoſtle ſays, 2 Cor. i. 12. *Our rejoicing*, the ſame word he uſes here, *is this, the teſtimony of our conſcience, that in ſimplicity, and godly ſincerity, —we have had our converſation in the world.* But no ſuch anſwer or teſtimony can be had from a good conſcience, where the

law of Chriſt is not fulfilled; and that cannot be without taking in what the Apoſtle's conſcience atteſted; not only *ſimplicity and godly ſincerity*, but that his converſation was not directed by *fleſhly or worldly wiſdom, but by the grace of God.* But where that is the caſe, conſcience atteſts all our works as fruits of the Spirit; and they that believe have the teſtimony in themſelves, 1 John v. 10. and need not go abroad to beg any confirmation from the good opinion of others, or by comparing themſelves with thoſe about them.

On this view of the caſe, it muſt be the great buſineſs of every man to have fair views of the law of Chriſt, the only ſafe rule. Conſcience can neither judge nor atteſt further than one knows; and indeed is nothing elſe but the internal conſciouſneſs of what one knows of the rule, and the conformity, or diſconformity to it, in the courſe of his conduct. God has not left us at a loſs. He has made a record of the whole progreſs of his grace and merciful kindneſs in his bleſſed Son, and the duties which ariſe upon it; particularly the great comprehenſive one of faith working by love. But as, either through negligence or incapacity,

capacity, the benefit of it might be loſt, he hath graciouſly appointed theſe important truths to be committed to faithful men, who ſhould be able to teach others; an employment more than enough for the buſineſs of any one's life; ſo that nothing can be more juſt and equitable than the order the Apoſtle gives to the churches of Galatia, verſ. 6. *Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things.* This is the proviſion for miniſters eſtabliſhed throughout the New Teſtament. Our Lord himſelf begun it when he ſent out his diſciples to preach his goſpel, and expreſsly forbid them to make any proviſion for themſelves, on this well-known point of juſtice, that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, Luke x. 7. On the ſame principle we find the Apoſtle reaſoning, 1 Cor. ix. 9.—14.; 1 Tim. v. 18. How then ſay ſome, that there are not, nor ought to be any ſuch officers in the churches of Chriſt? But vain men will be wiſe.

What follows, verſ. 7. 8. introduced with ſuch ſolemnity, many commentators refer to what was injoined in the foregoing verſe; and as it is the command of Chriſt, the

king and head of the church, and is ingroſſed among his laws, no doubt muſt not be left out. But the proverbial ſpeech with which he introduces it, and what he ſays of *ſowing to the fleſh and to the Spirit*, appears evidently to extend further, and to comprehend the whole conduct and converſation. Nor is there any evidence of a particular reference to that duty more than to any other, except that it ſtands next to it in the context; but ſo does that follow verſ. 5. to which it has no particular relation, but is inſerted purely becauſe the unhappy ſelfiſh ſpirit, and attachment to a preſent world, incline men to excuſe themſelves in the neglect of that duty. And perhaps the neglect of this ordinance of God for the ſupport of a goſpel-miniſtry, and ſubſtituting another method of proviſion in its room, has contributed more than any one thing to the corruptions which have in all ages diſfigured and diſgraced the Chriſtian religion.

He had ſaid, verſ. 5. that *every man ſhould bear his own burden.* An obvious truth, but of great importance. No body pretends to doubt of it; but this, like many other obvious truths, is very commonly overlooked, becauſe it is ſo: and therefore the

the Apoſtle had great reaſon to rouſe their attention, as he does, verſ. 7. *Be not deceived; God is not mocked.* It is he who makes every man's burden for him in the courſe of his providence; and he has wiſe purpoſes to anſwer by every burden he appoints, either in relation to the perſon himſelf, or to thoſe about him. For it is by theſe that he prepares and lays to hand theſe good works he creates his people for, Eph. ii. 10. and gives them opportunities of bearing one another's burdens. And this makes the moſt momentous of all the obligations they lie under to *fulfil the law law of Chriſt*; and aggravates the conſequences of the neglect, which thoughtleſs men are very ready to fall, and even run into. But we greatly deceive ourſelves, if we imagine any conſideration or motive whatſoever ſufficient, either to warrant or excuſe this neglect. It is God we have to do with. Him we cannot impoſe on, and he will not be *mocked.*

This ſtands ſupported by a truth ſo plain, that it has, I believe, in all ages, gone into a proverb, *Whatſoever a man ſows, that ſhall he alſo reap.* We ſee it ſo in the natural, and the ſame reaſon holds in the ſpiritual world. Two things determine the nature of

of the harveſt, viz. the quality of the ſoil, and the ſeed which is ſown into it. The proverb on which the Apoſtle founds, ſeems to carry it mainly to the laſt. But as ſowing ſuppoſes a ſoil of one kind or other, ſo it takes in the whole of that part of agriculture, not only ſowing the ſeed, but preparing the ground, in the beſt manner the huſbandman's ſkill can direct him. No body needs be told, that this preſent life is the ſeed-time, and the world to come the harveſt or reaping time; and all agree, that according to the proper application of our diligence and induſtry in what we ſow, ſuch will be the crop when ripened into the harveſt. Every ſeed has its own body, and accordingly will produce its like; and no body expects to reap wheat where he had ſown thiſtles or hemlock. But even ſuppoſing what is ſown to be of the beſt kind, if the ground is barren, or not rightly prepared; or ſuppoſing all the reſt right, yet if there be not a proper quantity of ſeed, and care taken to deſtroy weeds, one can expect but a poor crop. Theſe things are ſo plain, that every body can adjuſt the application.

It may admit of ſome doubt, whether the Apoſtle deſigns to repreſent *fleſh* and *ſpirit* as the two different ſoils on which men work in this ſpiritual huſbandry, or the different principles and views on which the labourers proceed, and the different kinds of ſeed which accordingly they are ſaid to *ſow*. The deciſion will depend on fixing the ſenſe of the two terms, *fleſh* and *ſpirit*; as it is in the different meanings affixed to theſe, that all the difference muſt lie. Thoſe who by *fleſh* mean the corruption of the human nature, and by *ſpirit* the renewing and healing it, abſtracting from the nature or conſtitution of which theſe are ſuppoſed only different modes and qualities, can find no more in the Apoſtle's words, but *indulging the luſts of the fleſh*, on the one hand; and on the other, *applying with diligence to mortifying the deeds of the body, and cultivating the powers of the mind*, for promoting that perfection for which they ſuppoſe man was originally deſigned.

But as we are aſſured, by an authority which may not be diſputed, *that what is born of the fleſh, is fleſh*, or that the child of Adam, with all his natural perfections and powers, is made for a preſent world only; *and that which*

which is born of the Spirit, is ſpirit, that is, created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, and made for living as ſpirits ought to do, as members of the ſpiritual and eternal world; the Apoſtle's words caſt up to us in a further and more comprehenſive view. And theſe two ſtand repreſented by two different ſoils; of ſuch different natures, that whatever culture and pains is beſtowed on them, they always produce, according to their nature, good or bad fruit. Thus the child of Adam, notwithſtanding all the labour and pains that can be taken on him, muſt end in death, and be reduced to that duſt from which he was taken; and that is all that they who employ themſelves on this periſhable ſubject have to expect in return for all their pains and labour. They have nothing to *reap* but *corruption*. But this is not all: every ſtep that is taken, or indeed can be taken, for the improvement of this untoward ſubject, produces only the more plentiful crop of corruption: for juſt ſo far as they who are *born of the fleſh* are raiſed above the beaſts that periſh, ſo near will they be found to approach to the unhappy ſtate and temper of devils, and ſecure to themſelves

ſelves their dreadful ſhare in the ſecond death.

But thoſe who *ſow to the Spirit* are in a very different condition in all reſpects. They have another kind of ſoil to work on, a very different kind of ſeed; and the harveſt accordingly is of a directly oppoſite kind: *For they who ſow to the Spirit, ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting.* I took it for granted, that what our Lord calls *Spirit*, is what the Apoſtle here deſigns, viz. *that which is born of the Spirit*, as oppoſed to what *is born of the fleſh*. It is true, that the two different ſtates of mankind, *under the law*, and *under the goſpel*, are oftener than once denoted by theſe terms; and might with great propriety be ſo conſtructed in this place; as it was the Apoſtle's great deſign, to draw off the Galatians from that ſervile ſtate, to the freedom and liberty of the ſons of God, which was held forth to them in the goſpel which Paul preached. But when all this is admitted, it makes no manner of alteration. The *law*, whatever it is that is meant by that word, if it is no more but *bare law*, is but one of theſe things that may eaſily fall within the reach of a

mere child of Adam; and obedience to its precepts, or keeping the *commandments* as it is called, is really a great part of that labour and toil he beſtows in *ſowing to the fleſh*; and ſuch is the harveſt. No deeds of law can deliver men from that corruption they are doomed to undergo: ſo far from it, that an attempt of this kind is, of all others, the moſt malignant work of the fleſh; for it aſſumes the name and authority of God; and under that colour carries on the moſt daring rebellion againſt him, by graſping at eternal life, in a way which, he has declared, cannot ſucceed, unleſs they could make it out for themſelves, in ſpite of his declared purpoſe to glorify the riches of his ſovereign grace in his bleſſed Son.

And what is the goſpel-ſtate, when drawn out at full length in all the properties and privileges of it? Truly no more but what is comprehended in this one word *Spirit*, *born of the Spirit*; and the unfolding of it amounts to the very ſame thing, *a new creature begotten and born of God, by the immortal ſeed of the word of the goſpel;* and maintained, ſupported, and carried on to perfection by the ſame means.

means. In the application of this ſame word of the goſpel, conſiſts the exerciſe and labour which the Apoſtle calls *ſowing to the Spirit*. In this view, compared with our Lord's parable of the ſower, this ſhould be the ſame with the direction the Apoſtle gives, Col. iii. 16. "Let the word of Chriſt "dwell in you richly, in all wiſdom." And where-ever this is received into a good and honeſt heart, it cannot miſs to bring forth a plentiful harveſt of everlaſting life. It is the word of life, the manifeſtation of the Spirit of life, and therefore the proper food and nouriſhment of the new creature. But though both the ſoil and the ſeed be very good, it lies in a bad neighbourhood; the *fleſh* and *Spirit* dwell together. This makes a continual attention, and diligent application, abſolutely neceſſary. The prophet's direction for preparing the ſoil, Jer. iv. 3. "Break "up your fallow ground, and ſow not a-"mong thorns," muſt be ſeconded with aſſiduous watchfulneſs and care againſt the roots of bitterneſs ſpringing up; *the fleſh luſting againſt the Spirit, and the enemy always ready to ſteal in his tares.* But, after all, as in the natural huſbandry the

richeſt ſoil, the beſt culture, and the choiſeſt ſeed, cannot ſecure a plentiful crop without proper ſeaſons, and the influence of the material heavens; (and theſe we cannot have at our wills, and if we had, we would not know how to chuſe): ſo the ſucceſs of the ſpiritual huſbandry is ſtill more dependent on the influences of the ſpiritual heavens; that is, on him who is the very ſubſtance of the ſpiritual world, and regulates at pleaſure all the movements of it; but with this unſpeakable advantage, that in the immenſity of his goodneſs, he has opened and eſtabliſhed a mean of communication which cannot be ſtopped or marred in its happy effects, in and through his beloved Son, in whom, we are aſſured, he is always well pleaſed; ſo that we may, with certainty, promiſe ourſelves all that we can poſſibly need, to ſecure a harveſt of life infinitely above our conceptions, and moſt ſanguine hopes and wiſhes: for he has aſſured us, "he will give his Holy Spirit to thoſe "that aſk him."

The native, and I might ſay the neceſſary, conſequence of this *ſowing to the Spirit*, which may very properly be called the

the *ſpiritual husbandry*, is what the Apoſtle, verſ. 9. calls *doing well*, and, verſ. 10. *doing good. That which is born of the Spirit*, or the new man, is created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before prepared, or ordained, for his children to walk in. Thus things ſtand as they ſhould do. The great creator and ſovereign has provided, and daily, in the courſe of his providence, prepares and lays to our hands, the work he wants to be done; and in the new creation, or new birth, fits the creature for the work; and, to cut off all evaſions and excuſes, has lodged an all-ſufficiency of grace in his bleſſed Son's hand; *grace to help in every time of need, that one may be able to do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening him.* This leaves no room to ſay, we cannot do this or that piece of work which is laid upon us. It is true, that in, and of ourſelves "we "can do nothing:" difficulties and diſcouragements ariſe on every ſide, which it is utterly impoſſible for man to overcome. But in Chriſt Jeſus there is really no duty, no good work, either eaſier or harder than another. Without him we can do nothing; but his grace is ſufficient

cient in every caſe, and his ſtrength is perfected in weakneſs; and what the Apoſtle ſays of himſelf, every Chriſtian may ſay with the ſame aſſurance, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth me:* for Chriſt himſelf has told us, "that "all things are poſſible to him that belie-"veth."

Accordingly we find, verſ. 9. he does not ſo directly injoin *well-doing*, or employing ourſelves in *doing what is good*; for that he ſuppoſes, as appears better in the original than in our tranſlation, though even there it is plain enough. But the admonition runs to thoſe who are employed in *doing well*, not to *weary* in that buſineſs. The Apoſtle's word ſignifies every kind of ſtaggering or indiſpoſition to any thing, from whatſoever cauſe it may proceed. And there are many, very many occaſions of wearying, from weakneſs and corruption within, and temptations without: there is a ſtrong combination of powerful enemies, *the devil, the world, and the fleſh*, with which a daily and hourly fight is to be maintained. And a very unequal match it would be, were it not for the mighty power of God,

God, and the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. There indeed we have a ſatisfying anſwer, how we ſhall keep from wearying, and even fainting, in this warfare; the only way to ſucceed, is an abſolute diffidence in ourſelves, and an entire confidence in Jeſus Chriſt.

The Apoſtle lays a good foundation to build on, in the cloſe of the verſe: *In due time we ſhall reap, if we faint not.* He leaves no room to aſk, what ſhall we reap? for he had told us in the foregoing verſe, that it was eternal life. This is one of thoſe texts which have been taken out of the connection wherein the author hath ſet it, and abuſed, to induce heedleſs men to expect eternal life by their own good works: for, ſay they, is it not plain, that he makes good works the ſeed which grows up into eternal life? Be it ſo. But what are theſe good works? The ſame, to be ſure, with what God has commanded, or keeping the commandments of God, which the Apoſtle John comprehends in theſe few words, 1 John iii. 23. "This is his commandment, that "we believe in the name of his Son Jeſus "Chriſt, and love one another;" the ſame which our great maſter calls *the work of God*,

God, and his apoſtle, *faith working by love*; which, he ſays, is all that can anſwer any purpoſe, becauſe it takes in all that God has commanded. We need not then diſpute about the effect of keeping God's commandments, if we keep them as he has given them; and if we do not that, they are not his commandments we keep, but our own: "What God has joined together, no man may put aſunder."

What the Apoſtle here ſays of the time of this harveſt, *In due time ye ſhall reap*, needs to be carefully noticed; for what that is, we are utterly unable to determine. What our Lord ſaid to his diſciples, *it is not for you to know the times and ſeaſons*, holds of all the firſt fruits of the Spirit, as well as of the full harveſt. Theſe, he ſays, *the Father has kept in his own hand*; for he alone knows what time is fit and proper for beſtowing any promiſed gift. Many poor ſouls have ſmarted ſeverely by incroaching on his prerogative. When they propoſe, in the warmth of their hearts, that in ſuch a duty or ordinance they ſhall obtain the relief, and ſupply they want, and find themſelves diſappointed; (and diſappointed they muſt be, if God's

time

time is not yet come); the temptation comes ſtrong, that the promiſe of God fails; whereas it is only the promiſe they fooliſhly and undutifully made to themſelves.

When our Lord directs his diſciples to *love as brethren, and as he loved them*, the ſelfiſh hearts of men are ready to pick a limitation out of it, viz. that it need extend no further; and that it carries a tacit allowance not to love, if not to hate our enemies: and if we can get ourſelves perſuaded that they are likewiſe God's enemies, then it muſt be a duty to hate them with a perfect hatred. The Apoſtle, as his maſter had done before him, allows an eſpecial love and beneficence to thoſe whom he calls *the houſehold of faith*; but our love muſt extend further, even *to do good to all:* and good reaſon, when our Lord has commanded expreſsly to love even our enemies, and by no means to neglect any office of love or friendſhip; *for while we were yet enemies*, yea, enmity itſelf, *even then Chriſt died for us.*

The epithet or title which the Apoſtle here gives to the Chriſtian ſociety deſerves likewiſe our notice, viz. *the houſehold of*

faith. The church of Chriſt is very frequently deſigned *the houſe of God*, and *the body of Chriſt.* Here it is ſet forth in a view which includes every member of the family, and the deſignation is taken from their way of living, very different indeed from the way of the world. The natural children of Adam have no other way of living but by ſight and ſenſe, which can extend no further than ſenſible objects. But the houſehold of God lives and walks by *faith*, the belief of the teſtimony and promiſes of God concerning unſeen, ſpiritual, and eternal things. Men may, with no great labour, perceive what is good and profitable to man in his preſent ſtate; but cannot find proper motives, ſuch as may be ſtrong enough to determine the heart to the practice of them. Nothing but faith can work love, and nothing but love can form the heart into a ſuitableneſs unto the goſpel of Chriſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. vi. 11.—18.

11. Ye ſee how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand. 12. As many as deſire to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh, they conſtrain you to be circumciſed; only leſt they ſhould ſuffer perſecution for the croſs of Chriſt. 13. For neither they themſelves who are circumciſed keep the law; but deſire to have you circumciſed, that they may glory in your fleſh. 14. But God forbid that I ſhould glory, ſave in the croſs of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. 15. For in Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creature. 16. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Iſrael of God. 17. From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jeſus. 18. Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirit. Amen.

WE have here before us the concluſion of this epiſtle, and a very proper concluſion it is for ſuch an epiſtle. He had made very warm intimations of his fatherly care and tender concern about them; and here adds, as no ſmall evidence of it, that he had written this ſo large a letter to them *with his own hand*. It was an honour that very few, of the many churches he planted, had, to

receive a letter from him; ſuch at leaſt as were thought proper to remain on record for the uſe of the churches of Chriſt. But even among thoſe which are thus preſerved, this is the only one which we are told was written with his own hand. It is certain it was not his ordinary cuſtom. But whether it was to give his rebukes and injunctions more weight with them by this ſingular condeſcenſion, or that his then circumſtances did not admit a perſon to attend him whom he would chuſe to employ in this manner, we have no occaſion to give ourſelves any trouble about: though it appears he was not alone; for he wrote with the concurrence of the brethren who were with him.

But there is one queſtion which hardly ever fails to be put on ſuch occaſions; and which, notwithſtanding, the Apoſtle takes little or no notice of throughout this long epiſtle: If thoſe things the new teachers were ſo intent on, were really ſo unprofitable and hurtful, what could have moved them, not only to adhere to them ſo tenaciouſly, but to promote them with ſuch zeal and earneſtneſs? Here he lets them

into

into the ſecret of it: verſ. 12. *They compelled* the Galatians *to be circumciſed*, and thereby *made a fair ſhew in the fleſh*. But the true motive of their whole conduct was, that they themſelves *might avoid perſecution on account of the croſs of Chriſt*.

The word our tranſlators make uſe of in deſcribing the conduct of theſe falſe teachers, viz. that they *conſtrained* them to be circumciſed, does not appear ſo proper to expreſs the meaning of the original; which imports no more than the plain fact, that they made their being circumciſed neceſſary in order to ſalvation. Nor had they any other compulſion in their power, than what weight this aſſertion had on the Gentile converts.

The character the Apoſtle gives of them carries ſomething very inſtructive in it. They were ſuch as *deſired to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*; and as many as had this view, inſiſted on the neceſſity of circumciſion. He had, chap. ii. 10. ſet the pleaſing of men, and the pleaſing God, in a direct oppoſition one to another. The former he renounced with great abhorrence; for this good reaſon, that *if he yet ſought*

ſought to pleaſe men, he could not be the ſervant of God. This has been in all ages the great ſnare in which multitudes have been caught. And it certainly requires a reſolution more than merely human to ſtand firm againſt the courſe of the world. Among thoſe who profeſſed the worſhip of the true God, the Jews were both the moſt numerous, and the moſt powerful party. In effect, they had all the worldly power in their hands, and wanted not enough of zeal to employ it againſt all who differed from them, even to the ſevereſt perſecution. The neareſt way of avoiding the effects of it was, either to renounce Chriſtianity altogether, or to bring it into a conſiſtency with Judaiſm, the then prevailing religion. There needed no more but a flaming zeal for the doctrinal characteriſtics of that religion, which were indeed all that remained of it at that time, the ſubſtance being, as our Lord teſtifies, deſtroyed by their traditions. And has not Chriſtianity itſelf been ſerved much in the ſame manner? How great a part of the Chriſtian world is to this day overrun with ſuperſtitious fopperies of man's invention? And even where theſe are de-

ſpiſed

ſpiſed as they deſerve, philoſophical morality is ſet up in the place of goſpel-holineſs, and mens own righteouſneſs in place of the righteouſneſs of God, and the grace of God, on which only true and undefiled religion can ſubſiſt. As it was then, ſo it has continued ever ſince, the moſt zealous contenders for theſe are moſt remiſs in the weightier matters of the law.

So the Apoſtle ſays it was then. The enormous zeal for the law of Moſes was no more but a fair ſhew, to recommend themſelves to thoſe who had the power in their hands, and could ſcreen them from the perſecution which the honeſt profeſſors of Chriſtianity were expoſed to on account of the croſs of Chriſt. And that it was no more, he proves by an unqueſtionable evidence. Had they been ſincere in their profeſſion, their regard to the law would have engaged them to a thorough conformity to it in their practice. But that was not the caſe. *They did not keep the law*; but while they exerted ſuch a flaming zeal for the external and circumſtantial parts, they neglected the weightier and moſt ſubſtantial matters of the law, *judgement, mercy, and faith*, Matt. xxiii. 23.

What

What they aimed at was, to magnify their own importance, by the number of proſelytes they had made; which the Apoſtle very juſtly calls *boaſting*, or *glorying in their fleſh*.

What the Apoſtle ſays of the *croſs of Chriſt* being the great object of the Jewiſh malice againſt Chriſtianity, and the reaſon of their perſecuting the profeſſors of it, which yet he makes the ſole ſubject of his own boaſting and *glorying*, verſ. 14. needs to be carefully conſidered; as by comparing theſe two different lights, we may be able to make out ſome juſt notion of the true meaning of that term the *croſs*, among thoſe who beſt underſtood the genius and conſtitution of the Chriſtian religion in thoſe early and pureſt times, before the ſimplicity and beauty of it was defaced by the inventions of men.

And here we may be very ſure, that by the *croſs of Chriſt*, they did not mean the *material croſs* upon which Chriſt ſuffered. It was certainly greatly below the Apoſtle's good ſenſe, to ſay no more of him, to glory or boaſt in a piece of timber; nay, it was even below the Jews, however ſtupid they may be thought, to

point

point their reſentment againſt it, ſo that one may juſtly wonder how it ſhould ever have become an object of religious veneration. It was Chriſt crucified, and dying upon a croſs, which was *a ſtumbling-block to the Jews, and fooliſhneſs to the Greeks*; but which was indeed *the power of God, and the wiſdom of God*, 1 Cor. i. 23. 24.

The malice and rage of the Jewiſh leaders ſeems to have been mainly, if not ſolely, founded in their unhappy miſtake concerning the nature of the Meſſiah's kingdom, promiſed and propheſied of by the prophets. As ſpiritual things cannot be brought under human conception, but by images and analogous repreſentations, taken from the ſtate of things in this ſenſible world; the pompous deſcriptions of the ſpiritual glory of that kingdom under theſe images, very naturally led them to promiſe themſelves a worldly kingdom more extenſive, and of courſe more glorious, than all that had been before it, extending unto the very utmoſt ends of the earth. And the proſpect would be the more agreeable, that they were then held under the oppreſſive yoke of the Romans,

from which they expected their Meſſiah ſhould ſave and deliver them, and give them the pleaſure, (the greateſt that worldly men can have), to bring their oppreſſors under the ſame bondage to them.

When therefore Jeſus came as he did, with ſuch a mean outward appearance, he was by no means a Meſſiah to their taſte: and notwithſtanding the aſtoniſhing miracles by which he atteſted his divine miſſion, they looked upon him as a deceiver of the people, and condemned him as a blaſphemer, for ſaying what their expected Meſſiah muſt have ſaid, whenever he came into the world. A ſuffering Meſſiah they had no notion of; and though he could not have been the Chriſt, if, according to Moſes and the prophets, he had not ſuffered, before he entered into his glory, they ignorantly concluded, that when they had brought him to the croſs, that there muſt be an end of his pretenſions; and the more ſo, that, according to their notions of the law, he was a very notorious ſinner, by tranſgreſſing thoſe traditions which they held to be of equal authority with the laws given by Moſes. But as he profeſſed to be the King of the

Jews,

Jews, and plainly declared, that the design of his coming was to set up a kingdom that should never be moved, they thought there was a necessity of putting him to death, lest the Romans should be provoked to come and cut off the whole nation, as he who professed to be their king was, according to their notions of him, utterly incapable of defending them.

Thus the cross of Christ became a stumbling-block to the Jews; but more so, when he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead, and the glory that followed. When this same Jesus who submitted to be crucified ascended up into heaven, had all power and authority in heaven and in earth lodged in his hand, and instructed it by the highest exertion of power, even by sending the Holy Spirit, according to his promise, on his disciples and followers, and that in such a palpable manner, as left no room for doubt or dispute: And when they themselves were charged home by his apostles with the horrible crime of being the betrayers and murderers of the Son of God, it was no wonder that they were filled with the utmost an-

guiſh. They had no way for ſupporting themſelves againſt the charge, but by ſuppreſſing the evidence of the facts which were ſo ſtrong againſt them; and no way to accompliſh that, but by either corrupting or deſtroying the witneſſes. Both were tried, but to no purpoſe; and there the offence of the croſs lay; which raiſed their rage and malice to ſuch a pitch, that, had it been in their power, there ſhould not have been ſo much as one left alive, who profeſſed the name of Jeſus.

But this was not all. There was another thing which appears to have touched them as nearly, viz. the nature of the *kingdom* which was introduced by the croſs of Chriſt. They had long borne the character of *God's peculiar people*, and looked upon themſelves as the ſole proprietors of eternal life, ſo that none could have any acceſs to it, but by joining himſelf to them, and ſubmitting to their law. They could not bear to have the uncircumciſed Gentiles put upon a level with themſelves; inſomuch that when the kingdom of heaven was firſt opened to the Gentiles, in the caſe of Cornelius, even the believing Jews could hardly be perſuaded that God had granted

granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles.

They had indeed some colour for insisting on the law of Moses. The Apostle himself allows, that they had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge; for it was all founded in their mistaking the nature and design of that law, which was designed as a pedagogue to lead them to Christ. But there was another thing which gave a keener edge to their zeal; the same which spirited up Demetrius and his fellow-craftsmen at Ephesus. On the observances of that law all their wealth and honours depended: and if Christianity, the spiritual kingdom of Christ, should take place, there was an end not only to their hopes of a temporal kingdom, but in effect all the distinctions, honours, and worldly gains they enjoyed were lost at once; and the priests and Levites, the scribes and doctors of the law, were reduced to an equality with common men, whom they heartily despised. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that the cross of Christ should have been a matter of such offence to them, as we find it was then, and continues to be to this day;

and

and that they ſhould pronounce him who died on it accurſed, as their law had pronounced every one to be who was hanged on a tree, or on timber of any kind.

But the Apoſtle ſaw the *croſs of Chriſt*, and the curſe he ſubmitted to, in a very different view; and openly declares it to be, that only thing he would boaſt and *glory in*. And he had reaſon; had it been no more, than that his ſuffering on the croſs was his entrance into his glory, a circumſtance that will weigh much with every true lover of Jeſus: ſo himſelf ſays to his diſciples: "If you loved me, ye "would rejoice, becauſe I go to my Fa-"ther." But there was more, greatly more: The croſs of Chriſt ſets forth the great high prieſt, "offering himſelf a ſacri-"fice for the ſins of the world;" and by that one ſacrifice doing what all the ſacrifices offered according to the law of Moſes, could never do; a ſacrifice which had not only the promiſe of pardon, but eternal life annexed to it. By the croſs of Chriſt, the terms on which the grant and promiſe of that life which was made to him were completely fulfilled, and the grant comes to us free as grace itſelf, ſo that every ſoul, who

who will, may come and take of the water of life freely. Upon the croſs of Chriſt the reſurrection of the body is ſet in the cleareſt light. There alſo a throne of grace is erected, to which the worſt of ſinners may come, not only with ſafety, but with the fulleſt aſſurance of ſucceſs, that they ſhall "obtain mercy and grace to help in every time of need;" inſomuch that the leaſt doubting or wavering is a ſhameful affront offered to the faithfulneſs both of God the promiſer, and his ever-bleſſed Son. And, to ſay no more, by the croſs of Chriſt, and his undertaking and ſuffering there, he has eſtabliſhed ſuch an union with every believer, as puts them, and their life and happineſs, on the ſame bottom with his own: ſo himſelf puts it, "becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo." And ſo it muſt be: for the Chriſtian's life, with all that belongs to it, and the whole of that fund on which he ſubſiſts, does not lie in himſelf, or in what is called *inherent grace*, however liberally the gifts of grace may be conveyed, but in Chriſt, and that inexhauſtible fund of life which is lodged in him; ſo that it is not ſo properly the man who lives and acts, as it is Chriſt, by his Spirit,

Spirit, who lives and acts in the man, and the glory of all belongs to him.

Upon this union is founded what the Apoſtle adds here *of the world being crucified to him, and he crucified to the world.* It is of no moment, whether what he ſays refer to the croſs of Chriſt, or to Chriſt himſelf; for Chriſt and his croſs cannot admit of ſeparate conſiderations. Chriſt crucified cannot be conceived without taking in the croſs on which he ſuffered and died; nor can we have any tolerable notion of the croſs of Chriſt, without conſidering him, the perſon who died on it. What he preſents us with here is, *the effect of the croſs of Chriſt on himſelf*, and on all real Chriſtians, who are all of them preciſely in the ſame circumſtances he was. When he ſays, *he was crucified to the world, and the world to him*, it evidently ſuppoſes, that he was formerly alive to the world, and the world alive to him. And it concerns us much to know what that life was, and wherein it conſiſted. And there are two ways by which I think we may come at it with certainty, namely, by conſidering the life the children of Adam live, before they are crucified with Chriſt, and the death

death which they die when they are ſo, and which puts an end to that life.

We need not ſpend many words on the firſt of theſe, as it is, without diſpute, the life we derive from Adam in the courſe of ordinary generation; in the very nature of which, and its whole tendency, it appears we are alive to this world, and only to this world, and of courſe, that the world is alive to us, in every ſenſe which it can be ſaid to be alive; that is, exerting its full power and influence over us: that as the Apoſtle ſays of the belly and meats anſwering one another, *we are made for the world, and the world is made for us*; that is, we are made for living on a preſent world, and to find proviſion there, both for the ſuſtenance of a preſent life, and the gratifications, joys, and pleaſures of it; but have no organs for perceiving any thing that is unſeen and ſpiritual, excepting only ears to hear the report of eternal and unſeen things, as we do preſent things which never fell under our obſervation. As this way of living lies directly contrary to that which ſpirits ought to live, the friendſhip of the world muſt be enmity againſt God. In this connection with, and the love of

a preſent world, the very root, and what may very properly be called the eſſence of ſin, lies. And hence occaſion has been taken to ſurmiſe, and even poſitively conclude, that this natural corruption is that very thing which in the New-Teſtament writings is called *the fleſh*, and *the old man*, which is ſaid to be crucified with Chriſt; and all that is ſaid of being crucified with Chriſt, and raiſed up, born again, and created in him to good works, are no more but bold metaphors, and ſtrong figures of ſpeech, and mean no more, but repentance and amendment of life. But it ſhould be adverted to, that ſins of every kind are only deeds of the old man, and the cuſtoms and manners, and conſequently only modes of the man, the child of Adam, who is crucified with Chriſt, and whoſe life and very being is there put an end to, according to the threatening of the original law, and the ſentence given upon it by the great law-giver.

As this was the death which the bleſſed Son of God ſubmitted to on the croſs, and the life he laid down there was that which he derived from the firſt Adam,

this

this muſt alſo be the life which they who are entered into his death, and made conform unto him in it, do renounce and give up with. This breaks at once all our connections with a preſent world, that it ſhall have no more to ſay to us, nor we any further concern with it. They who enter into the death of Chriſt, deny themſelves, take up their croſs, and follow Chriſt; and their conſtant buſineſs, while they live in the fleſh, is to mortify it, to crucify and put it to death; the only way in which ſin can be deſtroyed. And thus gradually the *world becomes crucified to them, and they to the world*; the fleſh, or that which is born of the fleſh, with its luſts, paſſions, and affections, die together.

This has, and ever will appear, a very hard ſaying to worldly men, who know no other life but a preſent one, nor any other fund of enjoyment, but what is to be found here. And by what the Apoſtle ſays, verſ. 15. it cannot be otherwiſe. I need not ſtand to obſerve, that *in Chriſt Jeſus*, is the ſame as if he had ſaid, As matters now ſtand in the ſyſtem, or divine conſtitution of grace, and that is the

only ſyſtem that will ſtand the teſt. Nor need we ſay any thing of his ſumming up all the unprofitable things which have been ſet up by men, under the two terms of *circumciſion* and *uncircumciſion*; for under theſe two are comprehended both Jews and Gentiles; that is, the whole world of mankind, with all the projects they have formed to recommend themſelves to the favour of their ſeveral deities, of whom they knew no more than was conveyed by tradition of one kind or other. So that, upon the whole, there was nothing left to Paul, or any man elſe, to boaſt of, and to glory in, but the croſs of Chriſt, and the grace which is inſeparably connected with this great and complete ſacrifice.

He had ſaid before, that none of theſe things could profit any thing, *but faith which worketh by love*; which, we are well aſſured, anſwers the mind and will of God, as declared in the commands given to mankind. But theſe are no more but the exerciſe and actings of that life which is conveyed from that fullneſs of life which is in Chriſt. But the queſtion might ſtill be put, How the children of Adam, dead as they are in treſpaſſes and ſins,

ſins, come by this life? Here he anſwers the queſtion, and goes to the bottom of the myſtery. The tranſlation we have of his words is by much too weak to expreſs his meaning. A *new creature* does indeed ſuppoſe a *new creation*. But this laſt is the proper ſenſe of the word he uſes, and by which he aſſerts the abſolute neceſſity of a new creation, as the only way in which a child of Adam made for this world, can be made a child of God, and be renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, and fitted for living as becomes that high and honourable ſtation.

It has been very poſitively aſſerted, that whatever may be the common import of the terms made uſe of to expreſs the change that is made by the grace of God, ſuch as, being *begotten* and *born again*, and *created* anew in Chriſt Jeſus, by which old things are paſſed away, and all things become new, &c.; yet there is no addition of new faculties, but the old natural ones directed in a proper manner, and upon proper objects. Whatever is meant by that cant word, the aſſertion is certainly made at random. We are ſure enough there are no new external ſenſes conferred in this

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new creation. But these are not the perceptive faculties, but the organs by which the man exerts his percipient powers. It is the spirit in man which perceives, judges, and reasons. And who can say what these powers and faculties of the mind are? and how shall we judge what are original? and whether any new ones are superadded, in what unerring wisdom calls a *new creation?* The exertion of creating power falls not under our observation. The effects may be perceptible; but how they are produced, no man, and I think we may say no creature, can have the least conception of.

When our Lord gave eyes to the blind, and limbs to the maimed, when he healed all sorts of diseases with a word or a touch, surely this was as properly an exertion of creating power, as forming a man out of the dust of the earth. These were sensible effects, and fell under every one's observation. No body could doubt, that they had powers or faculties given them which they had not before. When a parcel of rude illiterate fishermen of Galilee, without any previous preparation or instruction, shewed such measures of wisdom

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and underſtanding as were no where elſe to be found in the world, and when they were heard diſcourſing intelligibly in all the different languages known throughout the whole world, what ſhall one ſay? If they were not endued with another kind of powers than theſe known among men, whether we call them new faculties, or the old ones raiſed greatly above the common level of mankind, it will come much to the ſame purpoſe, as this is all the notion we can have of any difference among ſpirits. But to confine ourſelves to what is common to all Chriſtians, were there any inſtance of a mere brute animal having a rational ſoul, ſuch as man's, given it, would we not all ſay, there was in the moſt proper ſenſe a new creation? But we are well aſſured, that *if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*; and we are equally ſure, that this is not the lot of every man; and that naturally we are ſuch, as the Apoſtle deſcribes the natural or animal man, of whom he ſays, that *he cannot know the things of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* Surely the ſuperadding of that Spirit, which cannot be done but by creating power, muſt be as much a new creature. And

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if this is not the caſe, we muſt pronounce the ſcriptures, both of the Old and New Teſtament, the moſt inaccurate and deluſive books ever were written. And of all men, they who have the greateſt regard to the great author, muſt be in the greateſt danger; for they cannot help thinking, that he knew better than the wiſeſt philoſophers, what terms were the moſt proper to expreſs his mind by.

And here one cannot miſs obſerving, that as nothing can be of any uſe but a new creation, how vain and fooliſh every attempt muſt be to rear up a form of godlineſs on any other bottom but that of free ſovereign grace. No man can create himſelf, nor can God ever be bound, otherwiſe than by his own free promiſe, to new-make any of his creatures. And it is little wonder, that they who build on any other foundation ſhould find themſelves ſo unfixed as they muſt be in their principles, and ſuch determined enemies to the doctrine of perſeverance. Indeed they have no foundation for faith in this point. But this I only notice by the way.

But whatever men may think who reckon themſelves wiſe enough to adjuſt the oracles

oracles of the living God by their own ſtandard, the Apoſtle lays down the aſſertion as he had ſtated it, as the ſtandard of Chriſtianity, verſ. 16.; a rule or authoritative canon, by which all the diſciples of Chriſt, that is, all ſuch as have any intereſt in, or any thing to expect from him, are bound to regulate their conduct. For thus we find he deſcribes them; *ſuch as walk according to this rule*; plainly ſuch as have no confidence or hope in any thing whatſoever, but only in the grace of the new creation, and the happy ſtate which they enter upon who are born of the Spirit. It is of little moment, whether we conceive what follows as a declaration of what was their privilege, or an apoſtolical benediction. He conceives it in two words, *peace* and *mercy*, which will be found to comprehend every thing neceſſary to make out a complete proviſion for creatures in their circumſtances. *Peace* was the legacy Chriſt left his diſciples when he was leaving the world, John xiv. 27. where he calls it *his peace*; and left it to them, not as the men of the world do, who can only wiſh or pray for any ſpiritual bleſſing; but he left it to them as his property, and put their

poſſeſſion of it upon the bottom with his own right to it, and therefore abſolutely indefeaſible.

It is evident it was not worldly peace he there meant; for he told them, with the ſame breath, that *in the world they ſhould have tribulation; but he had overcome the world*, and its frowns or ſmiles were ſuch inſignificant things, as were not worth mentioning. It *was the peace of God which paſſeth all underſtanding*; ſuch as can fill the ſoul with a joy unſpeakable and full of glory, in ſpite of all that the world, and hell itſelf, can do againſt them.

But however impoſſible it is that this precious legacy can be broken in upon; yet there is ſo much weakneſs attending the faith of the beſt Chriſtians, and proportionable failures in the exerciſe of love, as could not miſs to mar their comfort and peace of mind, by the challenges which an honeſt conſcience will be charging them with; and which indeed would be inſupportable, were it not for the proviſion of *mercy* which the Apoſtle here joins with *peace*, as ſecured for them on the ſame bottom. The blood of Jeſus is abundantly ſufficient to purge the conſcience

ſcience from dead works, and anſwer all challenges, however juſtly made.

What the Apoſtle adds here of the *Iſrael of God*, we may not imagine they are any different perſons from thoſe who were walking according to the rule which he had laid down: for there is no other way by which any of Adam's children can contract a relation to God, but by being born again, and being created anew in Chriſt Jeſus. But Iſrael, according to the fleſh, had long maintained an excluſive property in God and his promiſes; and *Iſrael*, and *God's peculiar people*, were ſynonymous terms. But now, in Chriſt Jeſus, believers, of whatſoever nation and kindred they were, had as much intereſt in God as the native Jews, and were truly and properly his Iſrael. But as there were many ſincere believers in Chriſt who ſtill continued very zealouſly affected to the law of Moſes, through weakneſs and prejudice, there ſeems to be ſome good reaſon to think he uſes this general term, that he might not be miſconſtructed, as excluding them from the bleſſings of mercy and peace, which are the common property of

all Chriſtians, however weak, and in ſome points they may be miſtaken.

The order which the Apoſtle gives, verſ. 17. *that from that time no man ſhould trouble him*, looks ſo like his reſigning the care of all the churches which lay upon him, and which we find him reckoning among the burdens which diſtreſſed him, that it would go near to perſuade one, that this epiſtle was written near about the time when he finiſhed his courſe, and much later than that which is commonly fixed on; and the note of its being written from Rome, (which is not allowed to be authentic), ſeems much nearer the true date than any other that has been pitched on before he went thither.

Could we certainly ſay what theſe *marks of the Lord Jeſus* were, which he ſays he *bore in his body*, and which he gives as the reaſon why *no man ſhould trouble him*, we might come ſomewhat nearer. The word the Apoſtle uſes ſignifies properly *thoſe diſgraceful marks which were put upon criminals*; and as he had ſuffered often ſcourgings, and even ſtonings, no doubt the marks of theſe would remain on his body. But if theſe were the marks he here ſpeaks of,

of, he muſt have given the order many years before he was made a priſoner, and while yet the care of all the churches lay upon him. It would ſeem therefore, that the marks of reproach he ſpeaks of were ſuch as were put upon him when he was very near being offered up, as himſelf expreſſes his death. But indeed the whole of this diſquiſition is rather a matter of curioſity than of any great moment, on whichever ſide it may be determined.

The Apoſtle's concluding benediction, verſ. 18. requires more of our attention, as we are ſure it carries in it his beſt wiſhes for a people he had ſo warmly upon his heart. He begun his epiſtle with a ſalutation of grace and peace, two bleſſings which greatly ſuited their then preſent ſituation; and he concludes with the *grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, the ſame, no doubt, which he was aſſured would be *ſufficient* for himſelf, in the time of his greateſt extremity. It is of little moment, whether by this grace we underſtand that free love and favour which he always bears in his heart to all that believe in his name, or all that fullneſs of grace that ever God meant to beſtow upon

on mankind, the very fullneſs and all-ſufficiency of God himſelf: for the favour and love of Chriſt is not like that of men, but engages all his powers on their behalf, the whole almighty power of God; and this, no body can doubt, is abundantly ſufficient for ſupport and relief in the greateſt weakneſſes and dangers; inſomuch that we find the Apoſtle forming an expreſs reſolution, that ſo far from being diſcouraged by his infirmities, he would even boaſt and glory in them, 2 Cor. xii. 9.

This ſame grace is that inexhauſtible fund which the great Father of the family in heaven and on earth has prepared and laid ready in Chriſt for his children to ſubſiſt on; and which, for their ſecurity, he has lodged in his bleſſed Son, where it could neither be loſt nor forfeited. And indeed it was too precious a treaſure to be truſted in the hand of any mere man. By this the Chriſtian lives, and by this bread which came down from heaven he is nouriſhed, comforted, and ſtrengthened; ſo that when of himſelf he can do nothing, even then *he can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening him.* But this is all of a ſpiritual nature,

nature, and can only be applied to, and received in the ſpirits of men: and thus we find the Apoſtle directs it, *the grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with your ſpirits*; and ſeals it with an Amen, which denotes at once the heartieſt ſincerity, and the moſt ardent deſire of ſucceſs.

FINIS.